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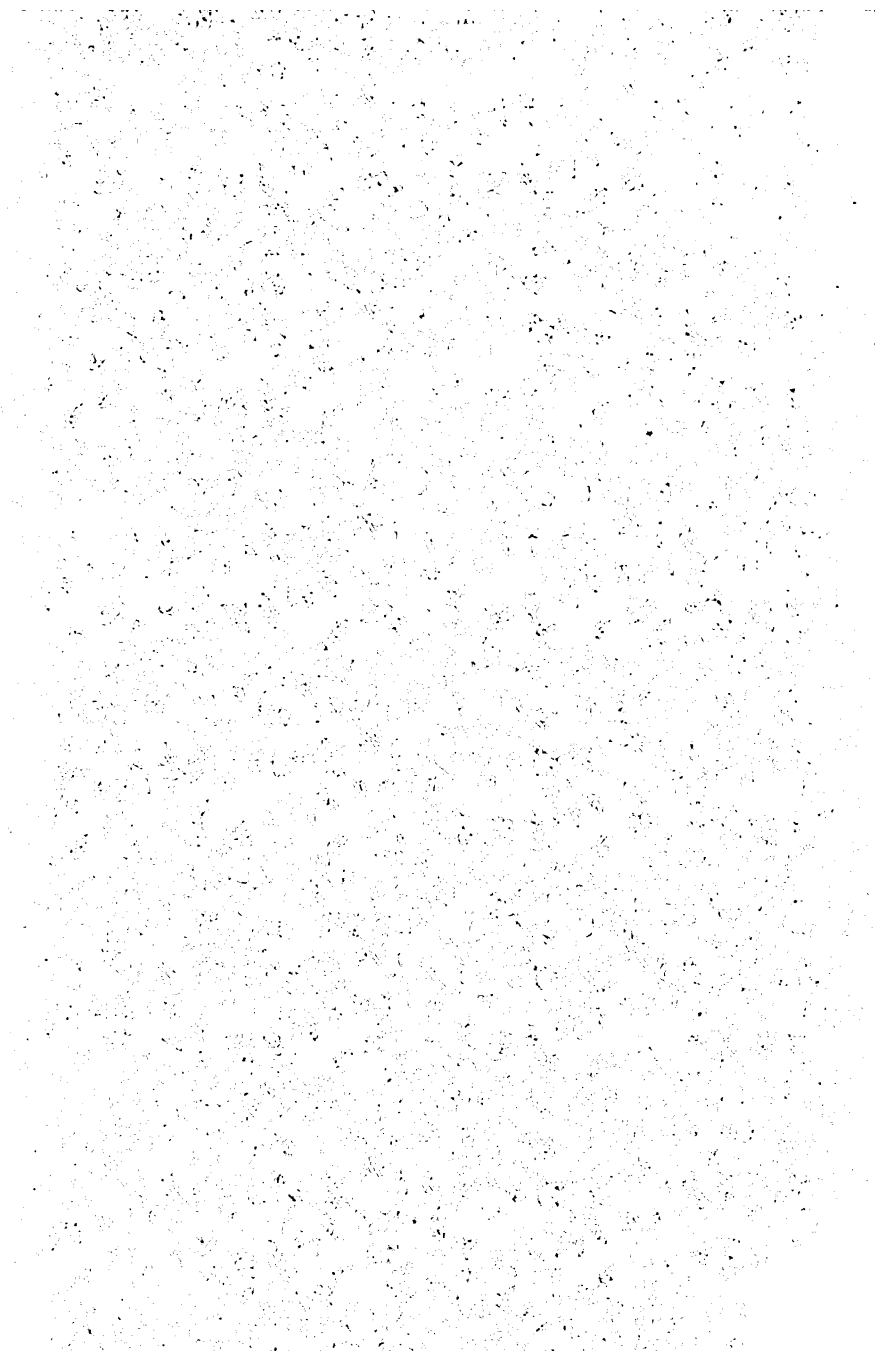
In Memoriam.

REV<sup>d</sup> JOHN M<sup>c</sup>DERMID

1882.









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IN MEMORIAM  
OF  
• REV. JOHN M'DERMID.



In Memoriam

OF

REV. JOHN M'DERMID,

MINISTER OF RENWICK CHURCH, GLASGOW.

WITH SELECTIONS FROM HIS WRITINGS.

EDITED BY

REV. W. H. GOOLD, D.D.,

MINISTER OF MARTYRS' CHURCH, EDINBURGH.

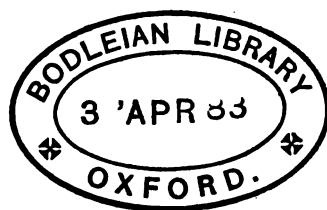
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1882.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

LITTLE need be said in explanation of the appearance of this volume. A strong desire was felt, not only by his own congregation, but by a large circle of friends to whom MR. M'DERMID had endeared himself, to have some memorial of his life and character and work. For this purpose various tributes to his memory from Church Courts, Societies, and the two Ministers who preached on the occasion of his death, and some productions of the deceased which he himself published in the course of his life, have been collected into one volume, and in this form are given to the public. If in any measure it prolongs the influence of his character and memory, it will not have been published in vain.

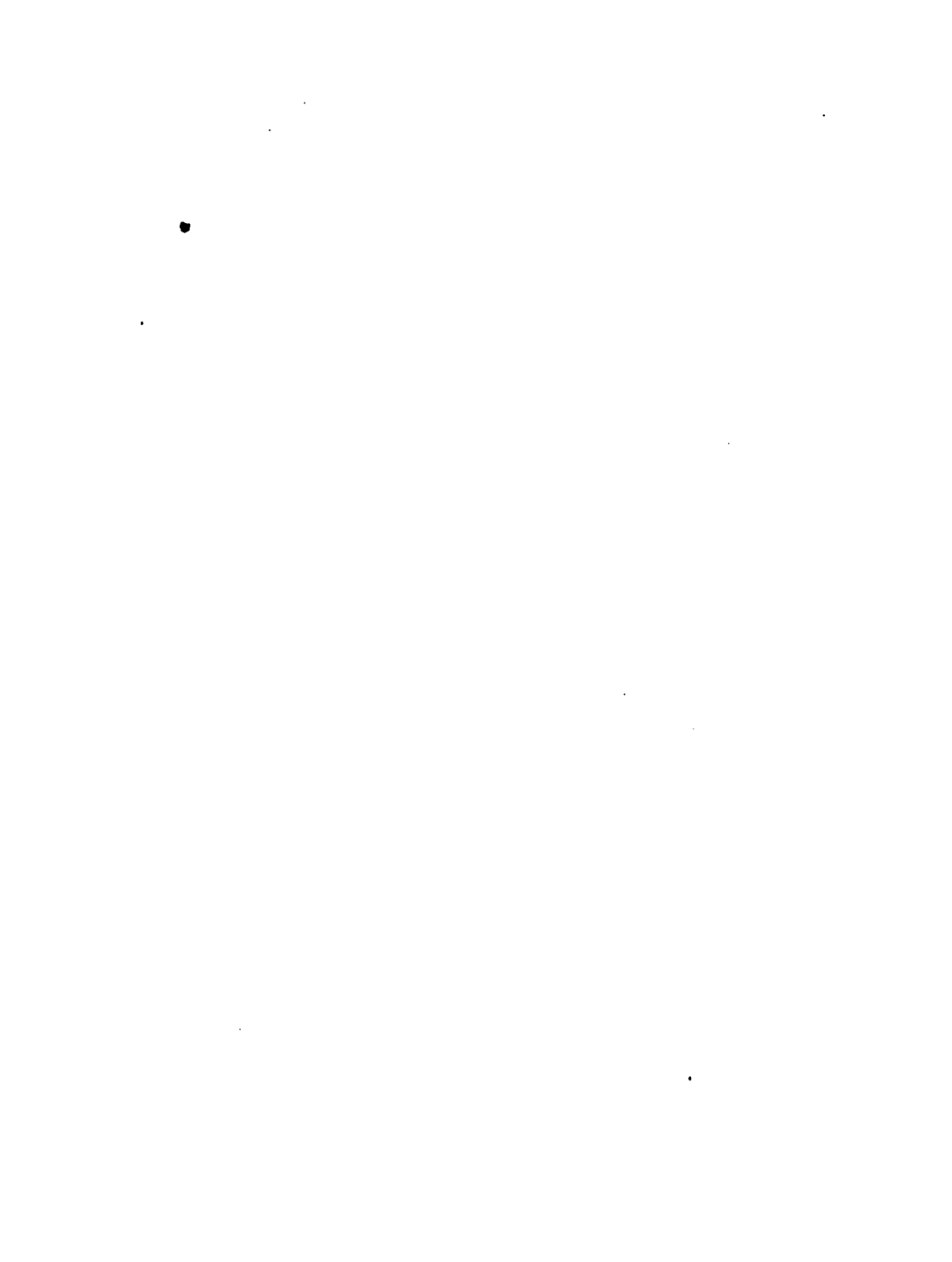
W. H. G.

EDINBURGH, *20th May, 1882.*



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# In Memoriam.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY THE REV. JOHN INGLIS OF THE NEW HEBRIDES MISSION.

THE Rev. John M'Dermid (of Renwick Free Church, South Cumberland Street, Glasgow), was born in Anderston, Glasgow, March 5, 1810; but before he was a year old his parents removed to Renton in Dumbartonshire. He was the eldest child of John M'Dermid and Agnes Ross. John had been the name of the eldest son in the family for many generations. There were six children in the family, of whom three were sons and three were daughters; all of them grew up to years of maturity, and through their whole life walked in the footsteps of their pious godly parents. Four of them predeceased their eldest brother, and only one of them survives him. The family remained at Renton till he was ten years of age, when they removed to Milton, near Bowling, on the other side of Dumbarton. His father died in 1821, in the prime of life, when John was only eleven years of age. His mother survived her husband, and remained a widow for the long period of fifty-one years. She died in 1872, at the age of ninety.

There are no traditions of his boyish or youthful days that would lead us to infer that there was anything specially precocious about Mr. M'Dermid; but there is ample evidence to sustain the belief that he was a thoughtful, staid, well-behaved boy, singularly free from all youthful

follies, and with more than the average of both capacity and application for the prosecution of his studies.

As soon as he was able to walk the distance, he accompanied his father to the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Paisley or Kilmalcolm. In this way, at an early age, he became his father's companion ; and the edifying conversation to which he listened in going to and returning from the House of God, and the eloquent, faithful, and impressive discourses which he heard, were powerful influences for the awakening of his intellectual and spiritual life.

After his father's death, he felt new responsibilities devolving upon him. His mother was a widow, and the five other children in the family were all younger than himself. His father had established and wrought up a successful business as a grocer ; and his mother, a woman of great energy, activity, and high Christian character, continued the business successfully, and brought up her family with rigid economy, but in great respectability, till they were all able to do for themselves. On the day of his father's funeral, he overheard a gentleman and one of his uncles speaking about him, and saying to one another, " Ah ! poor boy, he does not know the extent of his loss yet." But he said to himself, " Ah ! that I do greatly better than you think." He was always good to his mother ; he was a loving, a thoughtful, and an obedient son. He was specially kind to his brothers and sisters. His youngest sister remembers to this day how, on one occasion, he got a ride in a cart out to the country, and took her with him, and she recollects distinctly how careful he was to point out to her every object that was new or likely to be interesting to her ; especially when they came in sight of Dumbarton, which she had never seen before, how careful and painstaking he was in explaining everything to her, so much so that that day was a new era in her life, and has never been forgotten. During his whole life this brotherly feeling was strong in him. A noted example of this occurred about three years ago, while my wife and I were residing in London. This same

sister had occasion to visit the metropolis to see a niece away to New Zealand, who had made a visit to this country for the benefit of her health ; and he wrote to me, asking us to do anything in our power for his sister during her stay in London. After her return home, he wrote me a very kind and grateful letter, in which he prized the little attentions we had been able to show her greatly above their value, and evidently far more than if they had been rendered to himself. Indeed, in all the relations of life his kind and unselfish disposition led him always to think of others rather than himself. Hence I have often seen that both in his earlier and later years—the times in which I saw most of him—I scarcely ever saw a husband more thoughtfully and considerately attentive to a wife than he invariably was.

After the death of his father, with her children all young, it was impracticable for his mother to worship regularly in the Reformed Presbyterian Church either in Paisley or in Kilmalcolm. To go to Paisley, the Clyde had to be crossed at Erskine Ferry ; and to Kilmalcolm, the river had to be crossed at Dumbarton, a wider and more dangerous ferry than the other ; and then there were long weary miles to be walked on the other side. In these circumstances, while retaining her ecclesiastical connection unbroken, she took seats and worshipped in one of the Secession Churches in Dumbarton, of which the late Rev. Dr. Somerville was minister, a man whose praise was in all the churches. Possibly his coming thus closely in contact, and listening to the preaching of some of the best men in this church, as well as of his own, had a good influence, not only in developing and deepening Mr. M'Dermid's piety, but also in expanding and enlarging his views on denomination questions ; for throughout his whole life, while he was thoroughly and intelligently loyal to his own church, he was catholic in sentiment and charitable in feeling to the other denominations.

As a boy, and specially as a good boy, he had few equals. Like Timothy, from a child he knew the Holy Scriptures, and the faith which had dwelt first in his grand-



mother Lois, and then in his mother Eunice, dwelt in him also. He feared the Lord from his youth. His neighbours observed him, and his name was much set by. When about fifteen, his mother, in her hard battle for her family, thought of putting him into business, and spoke to Mr. Mitchell, a manufacturer in the district, a brother of the late Rev. Dr. Mitchell, minister of the Wellington Street Secession Church in Glasgow, and one of the professors in the Secession Theological Hall, and asked him if he could assist her in getting him into some situation. "O Mrs. M'Dermid," said Mr. Mitchell, "you must not put him into any situation yet; you must give him another year's schooling, and then we will see what he would like to do." His mother took Mr. Mitchell's advice, and he continued at school for another year. He could have been no common lad, who, at the age of sixteen, had so profited by his religious training that he was admitted to the fellowship of the Reformed Presbyterian Church by the Rev. W. M'Lachlan of Kilmalcolm, a man who, though kind, gentle, and considerate, fixed a high standard both of religious knowledge and Christian character for the testing of youthful candidates when applying for church membership. He had also so far improved his opportunities at Dumbarton Academy, that the same year he was able to enter the Latin and Greek classes in the University of Glasgow, where he took the Arts classes. He was a diligent and exemplary student. He was much beloved by his fellow-students, and gave great satisfaction to the professors.

He studied theology in the Reformed Presbyterian Hall in Paisley under Dr. Andrew Symington, a man who was the very personification of devout, earnest, enlightened, living orthodoxy, "a Senatus in himself," as the Moderator said of him the other year in the Free Church General Assembly. While a Divinity student, from his deep thoughtfulness and great conscientiousness, he felt considerable difficulties about accepting the peculiar or distinguishing principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church; but instead of flying off at a tangent and leaving

the church of his fathers, as many young men do in similar circumstances, he examined the subject carefully and prayerfully. He also made known his difficulties to Dr. Symington, and he, with that kind fatherly sympathy for which he was so distinguished, entered fully into his feelings, counselled him, explained the doctrines about which he was perplexed, and guided him through his difficulties, till his doubts vanished; and he came to the ministry, holding the distinguishing principles of the Church both firmly and intelligently. The doctrine of Christ's Headship over the nations, as well as over the Church, was to him not an opinion; it was a living principle believed in and felt, and no man knew better than he did how to apply this principle to the ecclesiastical and political questions that arose from time to time during the whole course of his ministry. Mr. M'Dermid was licensed at the age of twenty-four; and in the following year, 1835, he was ordained to the office of the ministry over the Reformed Presbyterian congregation in Dumfries. In 1855 he was translated to Glasgow, where he has laboured ever since.

There are no effects without causes; and in order to account for Mr. M'Dermid's early and earnest piety it is necessary to go back about a hundred years.

Although he was born in Glasgow, his father and grandfather were natives of Lorne, in Argyleshire, a district in which there was a great revival about this time last century, and which originated, so far as I can learn, in this way:—

A young woman of the name of Campbell, belonging to Lorne, came to Glasgow as a servant, and lived for some time in a minister's house. Scripture truth was there brought home to her mind in a new light. She was arrested and awakened, convinced and converted. The condition of her father's family now excited her concern, and she returned home. She told them of the change which she had experienced, and of the light, life, and peace which she had found. The tidings were gladly listened to by her relations. Other families also became

interested and impressed. But simultaneously with this another and more powerful influence came into operation.

At the instance of the pious Lady Glenorchy, the Rev. Dr. Smith, minister of Kilbrandon, translated "Alleine's Alarm" into Gaelic. As he translated the book, he read it or preached the substance of it to his people from the pulpit. These views of divine truth, so new to them, and so striking, were followed by remarkable results. Men and women were brought to live under the powers of the world to come. The Celtic imagination was awakened; and many, like Bunyan, had "visions of heaven and hell." The unseen world in all the reality of misery and happiness, of terror and glory, seemed to open up before them. Religion was no longer a form, it was a living reality. It was something worth living for, something worth dying for. The spirit of the ancient martyrs was revived on the coasts of Argyleshire. Lorne became *Iona rediviva*.

The issue was a general revival of religion; and not a few were built up in faith and holiness unto salvation. But when Dr. Smith was translated to Campbelton in 1781, an unacceptable presentee was, after the manner of those times, forced upon the parish of Kilbrandon. The God-fearing people used every constitutional means for preventing the intrusion, but in vain. One of the parishioners, Mr. M'Dermid's grandfather, if I mistake not, when protesting against the settlement, said that his conscience would not permit him to accept the presentee as his minister. When he next appeared before the Presbytery, the Marquis of Breadalbane's factor, who was acting for the patron, called out in a sneering tone, "Stand back, make room, and let in the man with the big conscience."

The result was that a number of the most pious families in the parish left the Established Church. But what were they to do? They were dissenters, but knew nothing about dissent. By some means they opened communication with the Rev. T. Henderson, minister of the Reformed Presbyterian congregation of Kilmalcolm.

He visited Lorne, preached to the people, and organized them into a society, or, as we would say in these times, erected Lorne into a Home Mission station in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

So genuine had been that revival, so fruitful in grace was that society, that, although the people never succeeded in obtaining a minister for themselves, or in being able to support one among them, yet, in the following generation, they gave eight ministers to the Reformed Presbyterian Church—namely, the Messrs. M'Lachlan, four brothers; Mr. Campbell of Newton-Stewart; Dr. Graham of Liverpool; Mr. Carmichael of Penpont; and Mr. M'Dermid of Glasgow, on whom the grave has just closed, the last of the eight. Piety is not hereditary; but the prayers, the example, and the godly upbringing of the young, insured its transmission in those families for a hundred years at least.

I heard Mr. M'Dermid preach his first sermon; it was in the summer of 1834, in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Airdrie (Rev. J. Carslaw's), in the pulpit occupied a few years before by the Rev. T. Halliday, a young man of very great promise, whose brief ministry was highly appreciated, and whose early death was widely lamented. The sermon was characterized by much freshness and originality. In writing about it to a friend at the time, I said something like this: "That as John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah, so, although I had not seen Mr. Halliday, yet, from what I had read of his sermons, and his memoir written by Dr. A. Symington, and heard of his character, it appeared to me that John M'Dermid had come in the spirit and power of Thomas Halliday."

And now, at the end of forty-eight years, when a ministry so auspiciously begun has been so honourably brought to a close, I am glad to find that my anticipations have been so fully realized. Though both were distinguished by a marked individuality, yet, as far as two ministers could be compared, of whom the one was taken away in early life, rich in promise of great usefulness and

much honour, and the other has come to his grave in a good old age after a long life and manifold labours, in all the great outlines of Christian and ministerial character the two men were greatly alike.

Mr. M'Dermid was neither a fluent nor a flowery, a sensational nor yet a popular preacher in the common acceptation of the word. But he was greatly better: he was clear, distinct, and emphatic in all his utterances; instructive, edifying, and impressive in all his discourses. He was an attractive preacher for all the more thoughtful classes of hearers; and, as soon as he was known, he was loved and appreciated.

Before he had preached a twelvemonth he had received three calls—namely, one from Dundee, one from Whit-horn, and one from Dumfries, while a large and influential minority voted for him in a fourth vacancy, that of Penpont.

During the whole time that he lived in Dumfries, he had one great source of earthly strength and comfort in the friendship of his brother minister, the Rev. James M'Gill of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Hightae, still of Bournemouth. Mr. M'Gill was his senior as a minister by a few years. He was like an elder brother; and they were such kindred spirits, and so like each other in Christian character, that the friendship of those twenty years was regarded by Mr. M'Dermid as one of the outstanding privileges of his life, and no doubt had a marked influence in elevating, sustaining, and strengthening his whole Christian and ministerial life.

He was a close student and a hard-working minister during his whole life. He prepared carefully for the pulpit, and attended diligently to all pastoral duties. There was a sweet unction and a deep solemnity in his prayers. He took a warm and intelligent interest in all foreign missions, especially in the missions of his own Church. He kept himself fully abreast in his knowledge of all the great questions and movements of the day. His extensive information, his sound judgment, and his consistent character, led him soon to be recognized as an able and

a safe counsellor, and it was not long till he took a leading part in church courts. Whenever a difficult or a delicate case had to be dealt with his services were sought for, and his efforts in such matters were uniformly satisfactory.

He was twice elected Moderator of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, first in 1848, and again in 1868. He was appointed a member of both the Committees on Union : the first between the four Presbyterian Churches, which, after six years, proved abortive ; and the second between the Free Church and the Reformed Presbyterian, which led to the auspicious and harmonious union of 1876.

In his own Church no man was more trusted, more honoured, or more loved ; and when the union took place his character had preceded him ; the Free Church was prepared to welcome him with the utmost cordiality ; and, since the union, the confidence, esteem, and affection accorded to him could not have been greater had he been born, brought up, and lived all his life in the Free Church.

He was uniformly serious, but never sanctimonious. He was genial and cheerful without the slightest levity. He had a fund of quiet wit in which he could indulge on fitting occasions. It was the salt that seasoned his conversation, but nothing more. It was said of the Rev. W. C. Burns of China that his great power for good lay not so much in what he *did* as in what he *was*. This was equally true of Mr. M'Dermid.

A lady who knew him well used to say that nobody could know him without being the better of it. Like Barnabas, "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Like Hananiah, "he was a faithful man, and feared God above many."

He died on the 20th of February, 1882, aged seventy-two years. His life and ministry proved a great success. While his numerous friends were eager that his life could have been prolonged, while his death is widely and deeply lamented, yet in few deaths that we have known was

there so little to be regretted. His life had extended beyond the three-score years and ten ; he had enjoyed through life a fair measure of health and strength ; his labours and his usefulness ended only with his life. His last illness, which developed into heart disease, was short, little more than a week ; his mind was clear till his last hour, and he died with his feet planted on the Rock of Ages, in the full assurance of faith. The final struggle was brief : " He was not, for God took him." His motto had been, " A life of union *to* Christ, and of cultivated communion *with* Christ," and hence to him sudden death was sudden glory.

The catholicity of his character was strongly reflected in the company that followed him to his grave.

His funeral was one of the largest that had been seen in Glasgow for some years. All classes were present. The Established Church was represented, among others, by Principal Caird and Dr. Marshall Lang ; the Free Church by Principal Douglas and the Professors of the Free Church College, Dr. Adam, and others ; the United Presbyterian Church by Dr. Joseph Brown, Dr. Logan Aikman, etc. ; and the Independents by the Rev. D. Russell, etc. The laity by such men as James Young, Esq., of Kelly ; James White, Esq., of Overtoun ; Dr. Anderson Kirkwood, and others.

Mr. M'Dermid did not publish much : two Synod Sermons, a lecture on "The Dignity of Labour," and articles now and again in the magazine of the denomination, constitute the most of his authorship ; but everything that he wrote was fully appreciated. He was twice married. He leaves a widow, a son, a sister, and a number of more distant relations to mourn his loss.

" Help, Lord ; for the godly man ceaseth."

## WILLING RATHER.\*

By WILLIAM BINNIE, D.D.,

Professor of Church History, Free Church College, Aberdeen.

"We are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord : (for we walk by faith, not by sight :) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord."—2 Cor. v. 6-8.

It is plain that, about the time when this second epistle was written to the Corinthians, the mind of the Apostle was much occupied with the thought of his own decease. The circumstances of his life had of late been such as made him feel that he might probably be called away soon. The present epistle was written, somewhere in Macedonia, immediately after the writer's narrow escape from the fury of the mob at Ephesus. I need not repeat the story. It will be enough simply to remind you, that, during three whole years, the Apostle had remained in Ephesus, preaching the Gospel with even more than his accustomed energy, and that the Lord had cheered him with a harvest astonishingly abundant. So successful had his labours been, that the local idolatry had palpably declined ; the gains of the craftsmen, who made a living by the manufacture and sale of the objects of idolatrous worship, were endangered ; and they had, in their alarm, stirred up the populace to make an attempt on the preacher's life. The attempt was unsuccessful. Paul escaped. But it was a hair's-breadth escape. That this was his own decided impression is plainly to be seen in the beginning of the epistle—"We would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, inasmuch that we despaired even of life : but we had the sentence

\* A sermon preached in Renwick Church, Glasgow, on the forenoon of February 26, 1882, being the Lord's Day after the funeral of the Rev. John M'Dermid.



of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead. Who delivered us from so great a death :” (chap. i. 8-10).

I am inclined to think that when the Apostle passed over to Macedonia and found comparative quiet among the disciples there, he became sensible that the toils, anxieties, and dangers of the three years at Ephesus had told more severely on his health than he had perceived at the time. It is to be remembered that the Apostle has now passed the time of life when over-exertion can be ventured upon with impunity. Five or six years after this, he describes himself as “Paul the aged”; so that he cannot now be less than sixty years of age or thereby. Anyhow, the presentiment of approaching departure crops up more than once in the course of this epistle. How touchingly it comes out in the verses immediately preceding the text! “We have this treasure in earthen vessels. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed: always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.” “For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (chap. iv. 7-12, 16-18). One result of this foreboding is that the venerable writer is led to open up here, in a very instructive way, the thoughts and feelings with which he contemplates the likelihood of an early decease.

It is this which has made the text so dear to all thoughtful readers of the Bible. It exhibits an authentic example of the thoughts and feelings with which those who believe in Christ may and ought to look forward to their departure. The subject is, therefore, one that comes home to us to-day. We are in mourning. A much loved minister

of Christ has been summoned to lay down his ministry and to depart. Not you only, who enjoyed the stated pastoral services of the departed, but others of us, along with you, are smitten with grief. For we are bereft of a friend and counsellor on whom we have been accustomed to rely—some of us for many years—with unusual confidence. The thought of Death has thus been powerfully suggested. The dullest mind in this auditory must, one would think, have been led to put to itself questions such as these, “Is it to be my turn next? Am I, one of these days, to pass away from this familiar scene into the invisible world? And if it should be the will of God to call me away next, what then? How ought I to be exercised in the prospect of so momentous a change?” These are questions which ought not to be parried—questions which (it must also be admitted) are more easily put than answered. There are ways of answering them which can do no man any good. All the more welcome is the assistance afforded in framing a right answer, by the approved example held up to our view in our text. What the Apostle puts on record here, according to the wisdom given him by Christ, is nothing less than a chapter of his autobiography—a chapter from which may be gathered much trustworthy information regarding the views and feelings with which he contemplated the close of his earthly life—much practical instruction also regarding the views and feelings on this momentous subject which are the natural outcome of a genuine and healthy faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I invite you, my dear brethren, to unite with me in meditating upon it this morning.

I. There is nothing more remarkable in this passage than the apostle's account of THE APPEARANCE WHICH THE TWO WORLDS—THE WORLD WHICH NOW IS, AND THE WORLD WHICH IS TO COME—PRESENT TO THE EYE OF FAITH. Mark how the two are described. The one is a being “*at home in the body*,” the other is a being “*at home with (Jesus) the Lord*.” This view of the two worlds is more clearly expressed in the original Greek than in the English. Yet, even in the English, you can perceive it

distinctly enough, especially in the Revised Version. The two are conceived of as *two Homes*—two Cities to which men pertain, and of which they are, in a sense, natives; the one home or city being here—in the body, the other being elsewhere—in the presence of the Lord.

I have said that this is how the two worlds appear *to the eye of faith*. For I wish you to observe that it is only to the eye of faith that this life and the life to come present the appearance here described. Consider the case of the man who has no faith. I do not refer only to the sort of person whom we usually speak of as a wicked man, a man of bad character. I refer to one of whom all that can be said is that he has not accepted Christ's invitation in the gospel, has not been reconciled to God, is not living in God's peace, is not living in habitual communion with God. It is certain that, to such a man, the two worlds do *not* wear the pleasant aspect of *two homes*. One half of the apostle's description he can, indeed, sympathise with very well. His heart goes along with that word "*at home in the body*." For, indeed, the man who is living without God, who is leading an earthly life, is, in a peculiar and emphatic sense, at home, so long as he is here, in the body. He answers exactly to the description of the ungodly in the 17th Psalm; for he is "a man of the world, whose portion is in this life." Everything he has ever striven after, everything that his tastes incline to, belongs to the present world. In this world he feels himself at home. But towards the other world he has no such feeling. It is a blank to him; or a region peopled with objects that are either foreign to his mind or full of terror. The thought of being at home in the presence of the Lord—being at home with Christ, in the holy company of the redeemed—is one that has no charm for him. His mind is not in sympathy with it.

II. If you keep in view this remarkable account of the appearance which the two worlds present to faith, you will have no difficulty in understanding the account which the blessed apostle gives of the feelings awakened in his heart by the prospect of death—THE CONFLICT OF DESIRES

which it awakened in him. He desires to be at home in the body. He is sensible of a certain clinging to the present life. But he desires rather to be at home with the Lord. The gravitation to the present life is overmastered by the more powerful attraction upwards to the ascended Lord. This, it is worth noting, is not the only place in which a similar conflict is described. There is another in the Epistle written to the Philippians towards the close of the first imprisonment in Rome. That imprisonment lasted for more than two years: and it would seem that, towards the close of it, the apostle was again visited with the presentiment of approaching death, which had affected him after the escape from Ephesus. It is remarkable that on that second occasion, just as on the former one, there was in him a conflict of two opposing desires—the desire to abide and the desire to depart. As, in Macedonia, he felt keenly the absence from the Lord which is entailed by being at home in the body, and accordingly was willing rather to be absent from the body, and at home with the Lord; so, in Rome, while quite alive to the necessities of the churches, and sensible that they could ill afford to lose his services, his heart was touched with the desire to be taken up from them into the promised rest. “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain . . . What I shall choose I wot not. I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you” (Phil. i. 21-24).

The remarkable and characteristic thing in these instances is not the existence of a mental conflict. I suppose that death never knocks at any man's door, without causing a certain perturbation and conflict. The remarkable thing here is that the conflict was a conflict of *desires*. The apostle would like to abide; and he would like to depart. He would like, I say, to *abide*. The desire to depart does not arise from a feeling of lassitude; much less is it caused by bitterness of spirit, impatience of life, a determination to have done with the world and its vexations. This is a point about which there has been

much misapprehension. The notion is not uncommon that it is a mark of piety to despise the body, to be weary of the present life, to be anxious to quit it, to be always taking the least attractive view of the present life and its affairs. Well, I will not go so far as to affirm that it is always an evidence of sinful impatience to groan under the burdens of life and to sigh for rest. In extremity of sorrow and disappointment, Job looked with covetous eye on the grave; "for there (said he) the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest: there the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor." When James Renwick, the youthful martyr after whom this place of worship has been named, was lying in jail, worn out with the toils and sorrows of his short ministry among the Persecuted Remnant, he wrote in a letter to a friend that death was to him "as rest to the weary." And who will venture to blame these holy men because their spirits groaned under oppression? Theirs were exceptional cases—cases of extraordinary sufferings and exhaustion; and the impatience they expressed was altogether natural. The Lord knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust, and he will not put a hard construction on the sighs of his servants. Still, it is right to remember that weariness of life is not by itself any proof of a right state of mind toward God. It may spring out of rebellious enmity against God. He was certainly no Christian, who said—

Men and the world so much I hate,  
I care not when I quit the scene.

No; the ordinary and normal feeling of God's people is that expressed by the apostle in the text, when he describes the present life as a being "at home in the body." The Word of God never countenances contempt of the body, as if the body were a base thing, a mere clog and incumbrance to the soul. On the contrary, the Scripture teaches us to regard the body as a part of ourselves. It teaches us, moreover, that Christ is the Redeemer of the whole man—the body as well as the soul.

Christ's work will not be fully accomplished, nor will the glory of his people be perfected, till they are raised up in the last day. Do not let your minds be sophisticated on this subject. It is not unlawful for the heirs of eternal glory to feel strongly drawn to the present life. The *body* is the soul's native home. God meant that soul and body should bear each other company. The law which obliges them to part company came in by sin, and the severance is unnatural. Besides, the *relationships and duties* of the present life have their attractions for every well-regulated mind. The Christian does not, by becoming a Christian, cease to love his father and mother, his wife and children, his neighbours and Christian brethren. Rather, his natural affections become purer and acquire a keener edge. As for *the Lord's service in the world*, it is not enough to say that he holds himself obliged to continue in it till the Master comes and gives him his discharge. He loves the service, and would like to continue in it.

But while the true Christian has this willingness and desire to abide, he has also the desire to depart. He has Two Homes. This is what distinguishes him from men whose portion is in this life. It is only in the body that they are at home. Take them away from the body and you take them away from their home. Their whole inheritance lies on this side of the grave. The Child of God, on the contrary, when he departs, enters into the full possession of his inheritance. He goes away to be *at home with the Lord*. It is hardly necessary for me, I presume, to explain in what sense the apostle describes the heavenly state, in contrast with the present life, as a being present with the Lord—at home with Christ. The contrast, you may be sure, is not to be taken in an absolute and unqualified sense,—as if Christ's people were condemned to spend all their days on earth without the sunshine of his presence, and as if his presence were a felicity to be enjoyed only in heaven. That, certainly, was *not* the intention of the apostle. Such a representation would have belied his own life-long experience. Looking back on all the successive scenes of his ministry, he could

testify, "The Lord stood by me and strengthened me." It has ever been so with all the godly, all the world over. They find their heartfelt experience exactly expressed in the tranquil words of the Twenty-third Psalm, Thou art with me, O Lord, my Shepherd: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. They are sure that the Lord is with them. The Christian could not feel himself at home in the body, were it not that, even while in the body, he can hold converse with the Lord. Still, such converse with the Lord as is attainable here is subject to serious drawbacks. It is neither continuous, nor easily maintained, nor perfect. "We walk by faith, not (yet) by sight." In the heavenly state it is otherwise. There, no night interrupts the vision of God. Christ's servants see his face. They see him as he is. No weakness, or intervening cloud, obstructs their intercourse with him any more. They are "*at home with the Lord.*"

Here let us pause for a little, that we may dwell upon this conception which the apostle has formed to himself, of Heaven and its proper felicity. It is a being with the Lord—at home with the Lord. It would be profitable in this connection, if we had time, to collect all the representations of heaven that are scattered up and down in Scripture. They are more numerous than you might imagine. Thus the patriarchs when they died are said to have been "gathered unto their people"—joined to the congregation of the righteous. That is one view of heaven—life in the society of the saints who have been made perfect. Another view has been touched upon already. Heaven is the rest God has provided for the weary—the Saints' Everlasting Rest. In like manner it is represented as a state of liberty—liberty from sin and the bondage of corruption—the glorious liberty of the children of God. These are bright representations; yet they are all eclipsed by this one now in view, "*At home with Jesus the Lord.*" We know where the apostle got this conception. It was from the Lord himself. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also:" "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me,

be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory: " "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (John xiv. 3, xvii. 24, Luke xxiii. 43). Plainly, this is the conception of the heavenly state on which Christ desires that we should principally dwell. Even under the Old Testament, a presentiment of it occasionally fired the hope of God's people. "As for me (they said), I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psalm xvii. 15). But it was the advent of Christ in the flesh, and his ascension to heaven in our nature, which first enabled faith to lay a firm hold on this conception. The fact that Christ has gone into heaven, in our nature, has made heaven a very different sort of place to the hearts of believing men and women from what it ever was, or could be, before. It has greatly helped them to get, and to keep, that *home feeling* in relation to it which is expressed in the text, and the effect of which is, that while they are willing to abide in the body, they are willing also to depart and to be with Christ. If there is much to incline them to remain here, there is much also to draw them away.

III. It remains to consider, lastly, THE STATE OF MIND IN WHICH THIS CONFLICT OF DESIRES ISSUES.

Here is the apostle's account of the matter, "We are always confident—always of good courage—willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord." *Willing rather*: the whole matter is summed up in these words. As if he had said, "We are in nowise afraid to die. The thought of departure is not terrible to us. Not that we can profess to anticipate with entire complacency the rupture of soul and body. Death came in by sin; and its accompaniments are in keeping with its origin. We do not make light of dying. The grave is a dark valley; but beyond it we behold the presence of Christ; and that is very glorious. So, then, willing as we are to abide for a while here, we are willing also to depart; and to this side our preference inclines. We are *willing rather* to depart; to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord."



I can imagine that some of you, weighing the just import of the words, for the first time, may be surprised to find an apostle expressing himself in terms so sober and measured, on such a subject.—“*Willing rather.*” You would have expected something more decided from such a quarter. You would have expected to hear a man of heavenly temper, like Paul, chiding the long delay, and exclaiming with holy passion, “Why is my Lord’s chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?” Yet this sobriety, this measuredness, is the very quality of the apostle’s exercise of heart which makes it so instructive to study, and so proper to imitate. There was a reason for it. To have gone further would have been wrong. The apostle knew how much work yet remained to be done, both in the conquest of the nations for Christ and in the strengthening of the newly-planted churches. He knew also how ill such a worker as himself—felt chosen vessel—could be spared from the field. He felt that it would be undutiful to the Lord, and unkind to the churches, to be craving his dismissal, at this time, from such a field and such a service. He was very willing, therefore, to abide. Yet neither on this side does he go beyond *willingness*. He has not set his heart on abiding. He knows that the Lord can find or make some other instrument by whom to carry forward his work. So this is the feeling in which he rests—this is the settled habit of his mind —“Willing rather to depart and to be at home with the Lord.”

And in this he is set forth as an example for all time. The settled habit of mind and feeling which he describes is exactly that at which we also ought to aim. For one thing, we ought not to aim at anything more ecstatic. There may be a show of heavenliness in spurning the earth and crying out for dismissal. But it is only a show. You yourselves do not take it well when your servant has no pleasure in his work, is impatient to be rid of it, impatient to get his wage and enter on his rest. Depend upon it, there is a kind of desire to depart this life which is no better. In proportion as we imbibe Christ’s spirit, we

shall take pleasure in his service and have complacency in the station he has been pleased to assign to us. If there is a desire *to depart* which is an evidence of grace, I venture to say that there is a desire *to abide* which is an evidence of grace likewise. Thomas Boston of Ettrick was, all his life, an enthusiastic student of the Word of God. When he was in the midst of certain abstruse investigations from which he expected much light upon the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures, he was seized with alarming illness. Pouring out his heart to God under this affliction, he declared his readiness to bow to the Lord's will, whatever it might be. He was not unwilling to depart. Nevertheless, he humbly prayed that he might live to finish his book on the Hebrew Accents. You may smile at such enthusiasm in such a pursuit. I confess that to me this prayer of Boston's has always seemed to be the utterance of a healthy and scriptural piety. It breathes the very spirit which expresses itself in the *willing rather* of the great apostle.

On the other hand, if we are not to go beyond this *willing rather*, neither are we to be content to fall short of it. To be clinging to life, when the Lord beckons us away, is certainly wrong. It is wrong in itself. It is a distinct refusal to say, "Thy will be done." And, besides being wrong in itself, it lays the soul open to dangerous temptations. Had Paul not been willing to depart, he could not have affirmed of himself, "We are always of good courage"; never through craven fear declining duty or fainting under duty. The persecutor knows from long experience what advantage he has in the endeavour to overthrow men's steadfastness, when they are afraid to die. Fear of death subjects men to bondage, and lays them open to many dangers.

What then shall I say as the conclusion of the whole matter? Shall I say, Be you always confident: be willing to depart: look forward with hope to the great change? I fear that exhortations like these would not avail much. It is not in our power to hope for this or that, at will. Nor is it in our power to throw off fear by resolving to be

confident. Hopes and fears do not come and go at command. Any counsel I would venture to give on this subject must run in a different line.

There is one consideration which I would, with all affection, urge on your attention. It is this, that *our souls' salvation does not consist in our being either here or there, but in our being accepted of God.* The essential matter for every one of us is, *first*, to be in Christ ; and then, *secondly*, to be living every day in secret fellowship with Christ, and laying out our strength in present duty. If I have accepted God's peace by taking refuge in Christ ; and if I am following that up with a life of thankful service in the station which the Master has allotted to me, in this case, I need not trouble my mind about the time and circumstances of my departure. The Lord will look to all that, and I may leave it all in his hand. The apostle puts this forcibly in the verse which follows the text, "Wherefore we labour that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him" ; as much as to say, "Present or absent is not the vital question. A man may be accepted of God in either state. On the whole, I am willing rather to be absent. That is my preference. But it is nothing more than a preference—an inclination, which I am ready to give up in submission to the Lord's will. But this I have set my heart upon, namely, that whether here or there I may be accepted in the Lord's sight."

If the question is still pressed, How am I to attain the Apostle's willingness to depart? I would suggest that this is one of the cases in which the direct road may not be the shortest. Willingness to depart is not got by resolving to be willing. Rather, I would say, Study to be much in Christ's company. If you suffer the world to crowd out Christ from your hearts, the future life will certainly not wear to you the smiling aspect of a Home. You will not feel yourselves attracted to it. Your affections will gravitate to the earth. But if you keep the world in the world's place ; if you converse much with Christ, hope will insensibly come in and become the habit of your soul.

And now, my dear brethren, I must attempt to speak to you a few words with more particular reference to the sorrowful event which has given occasion to my being here amongst you to-day, and which has thrown us into mourning.

I will not attempt either to delineate the character of your late pastor, or to relate his services as a minister of Christ. What is fitting to be said to-day, by way of a tribute to the memory of the departed, will, I have no doubt, be fitly said in the afternoon by the honoured friend who has now succeeded to Mr. M'Dermid in the position of being the oldest minister belonging to the old Reformed Presbyterian Synod—or at least the oldest still able to discharge the active duties of the ministry. Dr. Goold can speak with peculiar authority, as one who enjoyed, during his whole public career, the intimate and cordial friendship of our departed father. Still, without anticipating what may be spoken afterwards, I may be allowed to give expression to the sorrow with which your bereavement has touched me also. For I too was honoured with the friendship of your minister during a long tract of years. It is now 48 years since I first saw Mr. M'Dermid and heard him preach. He was only twenty-four; had just been licensed to preach; and was occupying for a day the pulpit of the Great Hamilton Street congregation, which was then under the pastorate of the Rev. David Armstrong. I was a mere boy at the time, yet I retain a vivid recollection of the youthful and beaming countenance of the preacher, and of the interest which his appearance excited among us. Fourteen or fifteen years later, when I was myself a probationer, I was more than once his guest at Dumfries, and was admitted into a cordial friendship, which grew always more and more confidential as the years ran on, and which I must always reckon among the most precious of the gifts I owe to the kindness of God.

Of other recollections which crowd in upon me to-day I will mention only one. When Mr. M'Dermid was translated from Dumfries and became your minister,

about a quarter of a century ago, the Presbytery devolved on me the duty of giving the usual Charge to minister and people. I cannot recall the heads of the Charge delivered; but this I well remember, that on the part of those of us who were specially interested in the newly-formed congregation and in the settlement of Mr. M'Dermid as the first pastor, high hopes were cherished and expressed, regarding the benefit which *you* might expect, by God's blessing, to reap from his ministry, and, even more, regarding the benefit which the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Christian cause generally, might be expected to derive from the settlement, in this great city, of one whom we knew to be so sound in the faith, so intelligent and sagacious in his judgment regarding the right application of the truth to modern circumstances; one, moreover, whose opinions and counsels so remarkably commended themselves to men's acceptance by his singularly unselfish and genial character, and by the high-toned consistency of his personal and domestic life. Let us not forget to thank the Head of the Church to-day for the large measure in which the hopes and prayers uttered on that Induction day have been fulfilled. You know what a blessing Mr. M'Dermid's ministry has been to you and yours. As regards the wider circle, every one who knows anything of the history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church during the last twenty years of its separate existence, knows that our father was one of its most trusted pillars. In the Free Church one hears from every side the most emphatic testimonies of trust, affection, and admiration: and the great company of ministers and others who were present at the funeral on Friday, bore witness to the high esteem in which he was held by the general Christian community in this city. His course is now finished; his work is done. His voice will no more be heard within these walls. I trust that those of you who got a blessing under his ministry will guard and cherish it, that you may have a good account to give at the Lord's appearing. I would fain hope that even in the

hearts of those who have hitherto failed to profit by his ministry (for doubtless there will have been such) the good seed may yet spring up after the sower's hand is withdrawn. This will be the best and most enduring memorial of his ministry.

With regard to the wider circle to which Mr. M'Dermid's influence extended so largely, there is no doubt that his removal is a great loss, and may well suggest the prayer, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth." Let us not omit to pray the Master to show His presence among us by raising up a succession of wise and faithful men, who may carry forward the Church's great work and warfare. What He has done in time past, in raising up such men as the man of God whose removal we mourn, should encourage us to trust Him that He will raise up like-hearted men in the time to come likewise.

## CHRIST'S ENTRANCE INTO THE HOLIEST.\*

BY W. H. GOOLD, D.D., EDINBURGH.

IT may be right to indicate frankly the circumstances which have guided me in the selection of a subject on which to address you this day. On the 15th of this month (February), I received intelligence in regard to the late pastor of this congregation, which awakened in me deep anxiety, and I did not hesitate to come immediately to this city, in order to see him, and to satisfy myself in regard to his state of health. I will never regret the step I took, as it gave me my last opportunity of conversing with him. I may refer to this conversation at the close, but, meanwhile, it may suffice to state that though spent and weary he possessed all his usual clearness and activity of mind, dwelling upon the grounds of his hope and consolation. With his wonted smile, he remarked that I could scarcely fancy what had occupied much of his thoughts during the previous night, and given him comfort during his hours of weakness and pain. He was pleased to state that it was a sermon he had heard me preach, some twenty-five years ago, on Christ's entrance into heaven, opening up certain views of his mediatorial work and glory in heaven. He said, and he repeated it, that he had often intended to ask me to deliver that sermon to his people. Glancing over it, for it has never been preached since, I found in it some thoughts suitable enough to our present circumstances, and in giving it now, therefore, I feel as if I were fulfilling the dying request of your honoured pastor, and transmitting his

\* A sermon preached in Renwick Church, Glasgow, on the afternoon of February 26, 1882, being the Lord's Day after the funeral of the Rev. John M'Dermid.

dying message to you. If it be, in any degree, your wish to meet him in heaven, it deeply concerns us all to know how, and by what title, we are to enter it.

Heb. ix. 12—"By his own blood he entered in once into the Holy Place."

Were we to select a passage from this epistle which, more than any other, gives the essence and the summary of its whole argument, we would be justified in appealing to the two verses in which our text occurs. To strengthen Hebrew Christians against all tendency and temptation to relapse into the forms of Judaism, the author is desirous of showing that a spiritual glory attaches to the new dispensation before which the Mosaic ritual paled its lustre and sank in darkness. The difference between them, in virtue of the Sonship of Christ, the founder of the new economy, was simply the difference between symbol and reality, between type and antitype. As the Son of God, in all the mystery of a divine and peerless filiation, he transcended in dignity angels, Moses, and Aaron. The law might be given by the disposition of angels, the Christian system was founded by the Lord of angels. Moses might be faithful as a servant *in* the house, Christ was as a Son *over* it. Aaron, though made a high priest by the law, could not continue by reason of death, but the Son, by the word of the Father's oath, is consecrated to the office for evermore. The point that would tell most on the mind of the Hebrew lay in the ceremonies of the ritual. As originating in Moses, and fulfilled by the priestly succession from Aaron, it would have its own charm. Such facts, however, appealed to the memory. The ritual itself was enacted daily before him, and when, under the teachings of the Gospel, that intricate and imposing system perished in sudden collapse before his eyes, he would be apt to feel as if his very faith perished along with it, unless the mind could be filled with the conception and belief of a nobler sacrifice than ever bled and burned on the altars of his fathers. And so, not merely in respect of his *nature* as divine, and his *office* as eternal and



intransmissible, but also of his *offering*, Christ must be shown to have enstamped a glory on the new dispensation so great that to apostatise from it in reviving preference for the old would be to renounce the substance for the shadow, and to seek the living among the dead.

In five respects that offering of Christ is here declared superior to all the sacrifices of the law. The *tabernacle* might be a sacred structure, rich in the devices of art, but the sacrifice of the Cross was transacted in connection with a greater and more perfect tabernacle—greater and more perfect because not the erection of human skill, but the creation of Omnipotence. The *blood* which covered Aaron from the stroke of justice, as he stood before the Shekinah, though precious in its typical significance, was, after all, the blood of animal victims, neither ours in reality to offer, nor as such of the least intrinsic value. But the blood which the Saviour offers is his own, precious as the blood of a human being, more precious by far as the blood of a Divine person. Year after year in the lapse of ages, victim after victim bled in sacrifice, each new victim as it fell only attesting that all the blood which previously had streamed from a thousand altars had streamed in vain, and could not open heaven for our reception; once, once only, once for ever, such were the infinite worth and sure efficacy of the Christian atonement, Christ dies for us, demonstrating the perfection of his sacrifice as it never needs to be repeated. The high priest of old entered into the holiest of all—an enclosure, it is true, too holy for the vulgar gaze, into which the high priest only, the high priest but one day in the year, the high priest not without the blood of a great sacrifice, could penetrate, and yet, after all, a type and nothing more—Christ enters into heaven itself. Lastly, the sacrifice offered in the great day of the atonement, because annually repeated, had no typical effect beyond the year for which it was presented, but the redemption which Christ has purchased is eternal.

Three of these points of contrast are within the scope of our text—the blood by which he entered—the circum-

stance that he entered but once—and the place into which he entered. It is of importance, ere we proceed, to fix the import of the last. It is a plural word in the original, a Hebraistic idiom for the plural of excellency, our superlative degree ; in other words, it signifies the holiest of all. Although there is much discussion as to what we must understand by the tabernacle mentioned in the preceding verse, there is none in regard to the holy place here referred to. The holiest of all is confessedly the type of heaven. We have an inspired explanation of the whole reference in a succeeding verse of this very chapter :—*v.* 24, “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, the figures of the true ; but into heaven itself.” But heaven is a word comparatively wide and vague in meaning. Does not the very symbol of it in the old tabernacle warrant us to form a more definite comprehension of the scene into which Christ has entered? The tabernacle was a structure of two compartments. The high priest, entering the holiest of all, passed through the holy place. In passing through the latter, the holy place, he had on his right hand the table of shew-bread, on his left the golden candlestick, in front of him the altar of incense. Behind the last hung the deep blue veil that screened the mysteries of the inner shrine. Lifting its sacred folds he stood in the presence of one object—a seat of peculiar construction, enclosing as in a box various articles : the pot of manna, the rod that budded, and the tables of the law. It was the Ark of the Covenant. Above it in curling wreaths of splendour played and hovered the Shekinah, the cloud of brilliant haze—the miracle by which God revealed his presence. All he saw reminded him—the throne of mercy and the shining cloud—simply of the presence of God. It contained no symbol of man’s happiness ; its chief if not its only symbol was that of God’s presence. He was there in the insoluble mystery of his Being, symbolized by the cloud—he was there in the claims of his justice as represented by a throne, the repository and embodiment of law—he was there, too, in the exercise and effulgence of mercy, rejoicing against

intransmissible, but also of his *offering*, Christ must be shown to have enstamped a glory on the new dispensation so great that to apostatise from it in reviving preference for the old would be to renounce the substance for the shadow, and to seek the living among the dead.

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his sin. Now, in refutation of this theory, let it suffice to remark that justice, by the instincts of our own consciousness, is something more than expediency—it is retribution on a principle of absolute equity. Further, were the atonement nothing more than a proof of divine antipathy to sin, we do not need it. Alas! everywhere throughout our world, in characters deep as the grave to which it sinks us, and deeper still—deep as the hell beneath it, we read evidence impressive and overpowering, that sin is an abomination in the sight of infinite holiness. And lastly, the view in question cannot hold with the importance attached to the blood of Christ. It is contrasted with typical blood. The type had no signification if it did not illustrate the removal of the penalty due to the guilty by the endurance of it on the part of the victim; and the worshipper presented his offering most assuredly, not that he might be taught that God hated sin, but because knowing already in his awakened conscience how intensely God hated it, he would be saved on the principle of substitution—on the principle that another took his place and bore his penalty. To affirm that the atonement is to vindicate divine consistency in the reckoning of man, not to satisfy divine justice according to the claims of God, is to make it an atonement for God not for man. And this language some have not scrupled to employ. Perish for ever the sentiment! It makes the atonement the mere device of a huckster expediency, a poor contrivance not to meet a moral necessity, but to give an aspect of consistency—a scheme forsooth to help Godhead out of difficulties—an apology for him should he venture to extend clemency to the sinner—a miserable composition in the bankruptcy of his justice! No, Christ offered himself, not for God to man, but for man to God. What a depth of mercy and of meaning in our text! The blood shed on earth must be exhibited in heaven!

But the doctrine that Christ's death is a real satisfaction to divine justice, is evaded in another form. Christ atones for us not by bearing our punishment, but by

exhibiting such a spirit of self-sacrifice as elicits a similar spirit in response from us. This view proceeds upon the principle of denying that the Father could be angry with sin—could make Christ suffer the wrath which was due to us ; it supposes that that substitution necessarily involves injustice. Touched by the meekness and self-denial of a dying Saviour, hearts are softened and won to God, and this is atonement, reconciliation, eternal salvation. The theory is a specious one ; it has been at one time commended to us by singular grace of style—at others, enforced by rude intensity of language. It may be set aside conclusively by general reasonings, by the authority of the Word, and by an appeal to our own consciousness and experience. First, it implies greater injustice than is ever charged against the doctrine of a real satisfaction to divine equity. It makes an innocent being suffer, not from a moral necessity which could not be broken, but to save appearances and to accomplish only a probable result. In the denial too that God is angry with sin there is involved the counterpart error—an error that savours of gross impiety, that he cannot love holiness—if there be no hatred in the one case there can be no love in the other. The theory starts an insuperable difficulty as to the existence of physical evil—the operation of disease and death—for if these are not proofs of divine anger at sin, of the retributive justice of God, on what principle are we to explain them ? Is the moral universe not under the control of law, but the caprice of chance ? We appeal to Scripture. Do we not read there of the wrath of God—that he is angry with the wicked—that he will by no means clear the guilty ? In regard to Arose, the Father put him to grief, the sword of Jehovah awoke to smite him, and if we do not read in so many words that the Father's wrath rested on him, we read what is worse, that he was made a curse for us. But our own hearts condemn us. The sinner on his awakening, and the saint in his eternal experience, need pardon on a ground that honours the righteousness of God. The consciousness of demerit—our sense of liability to pun-

ishment, never can be effectually met, indeed never can be met at all, unless we are sure that that punishment has been endured for us. Peace otherwise never can dawn on the midnight of our troubled bosom. Even in heaven the instinct of justice within us would suggest that the claims of law must be satisfied, and so the blood of the atonement meets us there, "the heavenly things are purified with better sacrifices" than those of type and symbol—"By his own blood Christ entered into the holy place."

2. He entered by *his own blood*, as implying *the infinite value of his offering*.

The contrast between the blood of the typical offering and that of Christ, so far illustrates the superior value of the atonement of the cross. In the latter case it was the blood of a *human* victim—of one who could impart to his sacrifice essential qualities that made it a valid atonement—a real substitution. As human, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, Christ offered in expiation of our guilt, not the life of an irrational creature, but a nature of *equal* value with that for which he suffered—not only equal in value, but identical with it—capable of yielding that consent of will as well as possessed of that oneness of nature without which it would have been no sacrifice. Still further, though human nature, it had a quality all its own conferring upon it a value far transcending common humanity. It was holy. Tried and tortured under varied forms of atoning woe, it was yet without sin. His perfect holiness made him an object of complacency and delight to the Father. It was indeed something to give for us when a being, shining in the lustre of absolute perfection, was hidden under an eclipse of penal shame. It may well startle the most careless when the bare conception is realized—perfect innocence suffering, and suffering such a death! This simple fact is of itself without a parallel in the history of the universe. The best of men dying with the best of motives, and in the best of causes, furnish no analogy. However excellent, they were but men, and as men, sinners—liable to the universal doom that overtakes

humanity. But One, holy in thought, feeling, and action, in heart and life, the pure and pellucid mirror of absolute perfection, and yet betrayed, bleeding, dying ; oh, there is a mystery in all this, apart from every other element, that should fix our eye upon the scene in wondering love for eternity. But love swells to adoration when we take in one other truth which beyond all others stamps infinite worth upon the blood of Christ. It sprang gushing from human veins, it is true—veins through which no throb of unholy desire had ever coursed and bounded, but in a sense it was the blood of God—we read “the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.” It is blood divinely precious therefore—the blood not of a divine nature, but of a divine person, because the blood a human nature assumed into union with a divine person. All this may be mystery to reason—Scripture admits as much—a revelation without a mystery would be a revelation without God, and we read of “the mystery of Christ.” But, oh, it is a mystery of love ! And as you think of the Son of God dying on the cross, his heel bruised by the serpent’s malice, his heart broken by man’s reproach, his soul overwhelmed with exceeding sorrow as he hung on the cross deserted by the Father, every attribute of Deity mustering in a panoply of vengeance against him—as you think of all this should the question occur, “What meaneth the smoke of this great sacrifice ?” look within thee, O sinner, and find in thine own infinite guilt the best explanation of an infinite atonement, the best evidence that simply, because it claims to be infinite, it is the only atonement that meets the case, the only atonement that ever has been or ever can be offered.

3. We are reminded by the phrase “his own blood,” as the ground on which he was admitted to heaven, of its *exclusive merit*. It was *his own* blood.

No other blood could add to its value—nothing could be a supplement to its infinite merit. First, as his own, he had *perfect control* over it. He could give it in propitiation for our sins. Angels and men, to the utmost extent of their capacity, must obey God on their own



account. They cannot serve, far less can they suffer, for others. Angels and men have no power over their own life—they are responsible for it to the God who gives it. But Christ was under no such law. And he only could do with his life what he pleased—"I lay down my life. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."—John x. 17. Who but Christ could answer every cavil against the greatness of his love in shedding his blood for us, with the answer, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?"—Matt. xx. 15. As his own—*it is not ours*. We are justified freely by *his* blood. It were worse than any attempt to invest the lily with a richer hue or the sun with a higher brightness—it were an attempt to add to infinity if we insisted on adding any merit of our own to what Christ has done and suffered for us. An attempt to add to the infinite value of the atonement really involves the denial that its value is infinite. Did the great truth take full possession of our thoughts, every emotion of pride and self-righteousness would die within us. The infinite merit of his blood would teach us that we could not abase ourselves too deeply, we could not exalt Christ too highly. Our hearts would be for ever under the sweet and supreme tyranny of love to him who first loved us, who so loved us, whose love to us passeth knowledge!

II. Consider secondly the character of his entrance.

1. He entered *once* into heaven. There is a significant emphasis in the expression "once." It marks a contrast with the imperfection of the Aaronic priesthood. Every year, as the great day of the atonement recurred, the high priest renewed his approach to the symbol of the divine majesty in the holiest of all. Not only so, but on a review of all the work prescribed to him for that day, three several times he must have entered the most holy place. Once within it, he had on each occasion to sprinkle the mercy seat seven times with the blood of the sacrifice—seven times, in order to express in symbol the perfection of the sacrifice. Our Lord enters heaven once for all—no annual repetition of his sacrifice is needed—no three-

fold entrance—no sevenfold sprinkling of his precious blood. On the strength of his one offering, as infinite in value and merit, he enters heaven, confronts the Father, and claims the fulfilment of every promise of the Covenant in behalf of his own. What that blood does for him it can do for the wide multitude of the redeemed as effectually as for one soul in all their number. Christ does not need to return to earth, that he may finish an imperfect work, or repeat a transaction that has lost its virtue. His title to the throne of mediatorial honour is too valid to be shaken by the lapse of ages. His oblation is too precious either to be *repeated* according to the doctrine of the Romish mass, as if it had failed, or *continued*, according to a more recent and subtler form of Romish error, as if it were still unfinished. “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”—x. 12.

2. He entered *meritoriously* into heaven.

His entrance was not merely a graceful sequel to a course of obedience and self-denial at the behest of the Father. It took place by compact. It was the reward due to him for finishing the work which the Father had given him to do. In relation to us it was to urge our title to eternal life on the ground of what he had done and suffered on earth. It was the conspicuous proof to the universe that he had done for us, what Adam had failed to do, he had earned for us the immortality which through Adam we had lost. He came into the ineffable glories of the upper sanctuary with no uncertainty as to his reception into its blessedness, with as little as to his continuance in it, no suppliant to beg it as a favour, with no tremor lest he should meet the frown of repulse rather than the smile of welcome. He came the rightful claimant of a reward fairly won and fully due. His appeal is to the equity of God. His plea is infinite merit—a plea established in mercy but endorsed by justice—ratified and sealed by every attribute of God.

3. He entered *representatively*.

Both as respects his engagements in the covenant and

his work on earth he sustained an official character. In all he suffered he represented his people—he was suffering for them. Substitution is the essential principle of the atonement. But the substitution is based on their union with him, so that they suffer in his sufferings—they are crucified together with Christ. And so, on the other hand, he acts for them in the enjoyment of glory. He is glorified for them that they may be glorified together with him. That he enters heaven in a representative capacity is plain from two passages at least—in chap. vi. 20, “Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec;” and chap. ix. 24, “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

And how is it we are represented by Christ in his glorious entrance into heaven? First, the *title is the same*—we enter by the same blood. What it did for Christ, so far as admission to glory is concerned, it can do for us—all the more by reason of the consideration that it was shed for us. He stands, man before God, the smile of acceptance and welcome beaming as with a halo of eternal radiance on his brow. Had he failed—had there been the least defect in his work, the least taint of pollution in his humanity, the least drop of evil virus in his blood, his rejection, if we dare entertain the thought, had been as sure as ours, and pronounced in sentence more severe, as it would have involved the ruin of the hope mercy had cherished from eternity. But the work was perfect, the merit infinite, the title beyond challenge, and, blessed be God, that title is our own! Secondly, in his entrance into heaven he represents his people, for they enter it in the *same character* as well as by the same title. They are comely with his comeliness, righteous with his righteousness. As accepted in the beloved, they are themselves the beloved of God. They enter into heaven not merely by a title that warrants all the glory of the privilege, but in a *character* that makes the privilege the

source of higher privileges still ; “ children of God, and joint heirs with Christ ; ” as welcome to the bosom of the Father as the Son who had lain in it from eternity ; not merely pardoned criminals but beloved children. “ Behold I and the children which thou hast given me ! ” Thirdly, he represents us, as he enters heaven for *the same ends* that we do. He had other ends assuredly besides ours ; we have other ends besides his ; but some we have in common, and so far he represents us. He entered it that he might enjoy rest, and so shall we enter into his rest. He went to his Father to be near him and with him. If it was glory which he sought, it was glory which he had *with the Father* before the world was. Whatever joy and glory are implied in being thus with God,—if he is in the presence of God, he is in the presence of God *for us*, and that in the end we might be with him. And lastly, *he entered heaven once for all*, so far as atonement of our guilt is concerned—so shall we. The redemption he obtained for us is an eternal redemption. We stand in heaven, not as we stood in paradise by the precarious title of our own obedience, but by the perfect title of an atonement, which, as infinite in merit, must be infinite in efficacy.

4. Christ entered heaven *sacerdotally*, as a priest in his functions, not less than as a king in his triumph. Perhaps too exclusively our thoughts dwell on his ascension in the latter aspect of it ; but it is an entrance by blood, and we know no more quickening and comforting truth than that of Christ as a priest in heaven.—Heb. iv. 14. Was it for no end that the worshippers of old Israel were made to realise this fact vividly, as they hung with eager eye around the tabernacle, and heard with wistful ears the sound of the holy bells tinkling on the person of the High Priest under his every gesture within the holiest of all ? Let us realize for a moment in faith the truth so specially symbolised, both as regards present duty and future privilege.

Christ in heaven a priest ! then what need of any priest on earth ? Ritualism dies the death when enlight-

ened faith rises to him entered within the veil, and accepted for us there. If the love that nailed him to the cross for me, keeps him in heaven still busy for me as the high mediator of the upper sanctuary, in the highest function of his office there, my heart must never be so disloyal to his claims as to divide its confidence between some poor worm like myself, a priest falsely so called, and him, the High Priest within the veil—consecrated by the oath of God, according to an order ancient as Melchizedek, and after the power of an endless life. On a threefold ground this mediation of Christ as the High Priest within the veil is of the highest practical consequence to us—the *sin* that taints our service and worship here,—the *imperfection* that mars it, apart from any positive sin,—the *unworthiness* of us who offer it. How rich the joy of faith when looking to Christ as our priest in heaven, it can meet all these, effectually and completely,—sin in our service by the value of his sacrifice,—defect in our prayer by the power of his intercession,—our unworthiness by the infinite dignity of his person—his supreme majesty as the Son of God!

Christ a priest in heaven! Then is heaven a *church*! What thoughts of power and beauty and tenderness gather round it as such! The church! It is Jerusalem—the *mother* of us all—the place for the breaking forth of children, of our birth for eternity. “Of Zion it is said this man and that man were born there.” It is dear to us, therefore, as the true home of our souls for immortality. As the child would be nowhere so fondly as in the happy scene of its nativity, so the heart, heaven-born, in the manifold evolutions of glory, great as may be the change, ever feels itself in the eternal home of its birth and choice,—as in a place where no joy and privilege accruing to us as God’s children ever shall be lost, but where converge and concentrate as in one focus of interest and rapture all that is sacred in our associations for the past, and all that is glorious in our anticipations of the future. But as a church it is pre-eminently a *scene of holiness*. “Holiness becometh the house of the Lord for ever.” And it

is no good sign of us if this aspect of heaven fails to excite within us a thrill of peculiar interest. There must not be the bare acknowledgment of the duty to seek such holiness as shall fit us for heaven; there must be the conscious and constant yearning after it—the feeling as if we never can be safe and at ease till the last dregs of corruption have been rinsed from our nature—till we are holy with the holiness of heaven and of God.

But heaven, as a temple, implies a *priesthood*. Christ has not only entered heaven and officiates in heaven by blood as a priest, but washing us from sin in his own blood hath made us kings and priests with God. In Christ we hold a priestly office and exercise priestly functions. More than once in Scripture our dignity in heaven is represented under the symbol of priesthood. Christ as priest in heaven is the pattern of what we shall be. In no sense can there be any return to the spirit and principle of the Mosaic economy; but the priesthood thereof as a type, and Christ as an antitype, both shadow forth some peculiar features of our celestial privilege, if we are to find meaning in the language of Scripture. Perhaps there are three aspects in which the old priesthood, better than the Christian ministry, symbolizes the dignity awaiting us in the upper sanctuary—the nature of our service, the basis on which it is rendered, our relation to the object worshipped. As to his *service*, the priest dealt specially and directly with God—in behalf of Israel he stood before God—his office implied immediate and continual intercourse and communication with God for man. The Christian ministry has as its special function the instruction of the people respecting God—to make appeal to man for God. The special function of the priesthood was direct appeal to God. And so our service above, refined into a spirituality worthy of the scene, shall have more of this immediate dealing with God, there being neither sin to disturb us, nor this world with its worldliness to distract us. In harmony with this idea, as a *priest is nothing without a sacrifice*, so in heaven we may realize more vividly than ever

we can do on earth our connection with and our interest in the blood of Christ, as the only sacrifice availing there ; and in correspondence with this thought, how often is he represented as in heaven the Lamb as it had been slain. It tests the whole character of our spiritual exercises and proves them hollow, if we look upon his blood as doing its work merely in raising us to heaven—if we look upon it as losing its virtue so soon as we cross the threshold, its efficacy exhausted, its work done, its glory departed. Are we going too far in affirming that it will be felt as more precious in heaven than on earth? More precious in this sense, that in the light of heaven, with no sin to obscure our perceptions, and with its blessed effects actually realized as we stand transfigured in the glories of the beatific vision, we shall comprehend its value unspeakably better ; we shall cling to it with a deeper interest and plead it with a holier urgency, as the one sacrifice, without which, as the building of mercy could never have been reared, so it could not for a moment endure. And lastly, the old priesthood had *direct access to God*—the high priest approached the special symbol of his presence—he entered within the vail. Christ entering heaven by his own blood hath fulfilled the type, and more than fulfilled it. He entered, not like the high priest timidly lifting the august and heavy folds of the blue curtain, which dropped rapidly again to the floor that none might follow, but with the strong arm of a conqueror, red from the winepress of a mightier conflict and a nobler victory than earth has ever elsewhere seen, rending it for ever asunder, that we too, spoiling the grave of victory, might pass into the holiest of all. As we enter it by faith now, it is not the symbol, however glorious, but God himself with whom we have to do. As we shall enter it hereafter in the full consummation of the blessed type, we shall find ourselves in Christ priests indeed—we shall feel that we have God before us, seeing him face to face, and knowing him even as we are known.

To close, could we this moment open our eyes in heaven, we would see enough to teach us the eternal

efficacy of the blood of Christ. All things in heaven are sprinkled and purified with it. You are to commemorate it on earth,—you are to enter heaven by it,—you are to constitute it the matter of your immortal song, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” Amid all the fluctuations of religious theory and speculation, let your thoughts dwell habitually on the blood of Christ. It is that aspect of his work which perhaps more than any other illustrates the fulness of his love. “The blood is the life,” and is shed for us. It means life given for our life—life given away for us by a cruel death,—life given away in sacrifice,—life given freely in the strength of a love which no flood could drown. Christ as our representative had no right or title to enter heaven apart from this blood. It opened heaven for him—it can open heaven for you. There is no other entrance but by this blood. For all the purposes of faith and holiness it is indispensable you keep the blood of the atonement in constant remembrance. If you would be sure of the love of Christ, seek a fresh sprinkling of this blood. If you would serve the living God, see that your conscience is purged, as it only can be, by the blood of Christ. If you would destroy all confidence in the flesh and self, go to the blood of Christ, and it will teach that a sacrifice so clearly infinite implies the nullity or needlessness of all other merit. If you would surmount temptation, overcome it as martyrs have overcome before you, by the blood of the Lamb. If you would prevail in prayer, clench every plea by the blood of Christ. If you would stand in judgment, hold up in dauntless faith, pardon ratified and written in this most precious blood. And when at last you stand, a blood-besprinkled throng, amid scenes incarnadined with the eternal memories of the old atonement on the cross, you shall lift up your eyes without fear, in the exercise of a love that casteth out all fear, upon the throne of God, for that throne is covered with the same propitiating blood, is occupied by your Father, reconciled and revealed to you in Christ.

O earth! earth! earth! Hear the word of the Lord.



Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Had no blood been shed for us, sad had been our condition here, sadder far the doom in prospect. But, sinner, I can tell thee of a doom sadder still—the doom impending over thee, if, with this blood shed and offered thee, thou rejectest it. Ay, and of a doom saddest of all—due to him who, after a profession, or under a profession, is secretly drawing back to perdition; for this were not merely to crucify the Lord afresh, but in the frenzy of sin, in the tremendous consummation of thy guilt, to tread under foot the Son of God!

Such were the truths your late pastor delighted to hear—which he himself so often in his own happy vein of thoughtful earnestness delighted to preach—under the influence of which he lived, in the faith of which he died.

After the just and touching allusions to his history and character made by the esteemed brother who preached here in the earlier service of the day, it may seem almost superfluous for me to offer any remarks in addition. I cannot refrain, however, from offering a brief tribute to the memory, from laying another wreath upon the grave of one of my oldest, best, and dearest friends. John M'Dermid was altogether a character of such peculiar excellence, that the very remembrance of him has a sanctifying effect, even as I have heard it remarked of him when alive that it was impossible to enjoy an interview with him without feeling yourself wiser and better. The modesty that kept him so unobtrusive through life may well justify specific reference to his many gifts and excellences now that he is gone.

His character seems to have been formed and developed under the influence of parental piety. He was born at Anderston, in Glasgow, in 1810, but the family removed while he was yet young to Milton, near Dumbarton. Brought up in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, he sometimes in his boyhood crossed the Clyde with his parents to worship in Kilmalcolm under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. M'Lachlan. It was easy to see

from his allusions to this custom of repairing to the sanctuary in spite of difficulties and distance, that, although in our day it may appear an extreme, yet it told upon him, giving him that respect for conscientious principle which became an element in his character through life. When he had passed through the University of Glasgow, he entered the Theological Hall of his denomination in 1830, and it was then that he came under the influence of a professor who, so far as I can judge, did more than any other to determine the tenor and habits of his future life. Our late friend combined with his rare and singular independence of thought, a generous veneration for Christian worth wherever he could discover it, and I utter almost his own fervent testimony when I state that nowhere did he find in all the intercourse of life a character that so fascinated and impressed him as that of his revered professor at Paisley, Dr. Andrew Symington. Drawing from such a model, the young student could hardly fail to become noted for earnest and pious orthodoxy as a preacher—for all that was faithful and diligent and genial in the exercise of the pastoral office. Licensed in 1834, he was ordained to the ministry at Dumfries in the following year. Transferred to Glasgow in 1855, he has just ended an honourable ministry of twenty-seven years in this city. How faithfully he watched over you and ministered to you, what solemn unction he infused into his appeals, what a savour of holiness and prayerfulness attended him, how well the afflicted amongst you could reckon upon the deep and devout sympathies of his sanctified heart, how his fine expressive features, lighted up with the glow of Christian love, were wont to brighten your dwellings, how uniform and unvarying his courtesy—more than courtesy—his genuine kindness to old and young among you, how wisely he bore himself in the courts and committees of the church, it were needless for me to describe. The picture is already drawn, more vividly and truly than by any poor words of mine, drawn in your own hearts—hearts that will cherish his memory while you live.

The prominent quality in his preaching was thoughtfulness. It was searching, quickening, soul-feeding. The truth he uttered was truth he had made his own. He had not the gifts of popular oratory in the sense of fluency, imagination, direct and impetuous utterance. He left the impression of a mind exceedingly anxious to be very sure of his ground in all he advanced, and as anxious to avoid overstating any position, or investing it with an excess of colouring. But when once he had satisfied himself in regard to the principle he enforced and had conducted his hearers to the same point of view, all the more forcible and commanding were the appeals he made to the heart and conscience on the strength of the beliefs which he had been establishing with such caution and seeming hesitancy at the outset. The waters by long repression rose higher and higher, and so the torrent when it burst forth was more sweeping and effective. He was evangelical in the highest and best sense of the term. He preached the gospel not merely by a correct enunciation of the doctrines constituting it. Christ was life to him, and so for him to live was Christ, and Christ was law. The truth with him was no dead letter—no barren dogma. Received into his own heart of faith and woven into the whole texture of his life, he sought to render it to his hearers, what he found it in his own experience—the mould of character and the spring of action.

Beyond an occasional sermon and lecture, he published little. A sermon on "National Religion" was highly appreciated. There was, moreover, a charming series of papers by him, entitled "Hours with Scripture," which appeared in the magazine of his Church about 1867, and in them, more than any other production, one can trace his best qualities as a thinker: reflection that penetrated beyond the surface of facts and truths, a sweet and quiet sanctity of feeling, and yet a direction and tendency eminently practical amid all his elevated spirituality of thought, as well as habitual fellowship with his Saviour, and a thrilling sense of the Divine eye and presence.

It is a fair and legitimate subject of enquiry, when a man holding a public office and pursuing a course of public usefulness is removed from us, what may have been the precise and special end of all his service on earth, if any particular result is due to him in the history of the Church and the community. Good men there are, and able men, who have fulfilled to admiration all the social duties of their life and station, and yet no special issues can be traced to their character and actions. There are others, again, who seem raised up by Providence to achieve special results—to leave, so to speak, a special mark on the community, civil or ecclesiastical, to which they belonged. The influence might be felt within a comparatively narrow circle, but the claim may be preferred in behalf of John M'Dermid that his life tended to special and interesting results. His mind, as we have attempted to pourtray it, analytic in a high degree, sifted the ground of every belief he held. He examined every principle and every question all round; he was not content with the acceptance of recognised views. The veneration so deeply seated in his nature—and this principle, so far from a weakness, seems essential to the higher order of minds—might have tempted him to acquiesce in traditional beliefs, if held by men he loved and revered. But it did not. So far from this, he has been known in his Synod to stand alone, although in the end the position he held came to be accepted almost unanimously as right and true. He was the very last man to rest in the old rut and routine of usage and opinion, and yet no man more tenacious, resolute to self-sacrifice in the maintenance of all that was sound and scriptural. He despised change for the sake of change. His Christian integrity, his firm grasp of evangelical beliefs, and the spirit of adoration enkindled within him whenever he thought or spoke of Christ in his Headship not merely over the Church, but over the nations, gave weight to his conclusions when he came to test the relations of the Church to the State and society around it. It was felt that the question deserved consideration when such a man intelligent, thoughtful,

conscientious, loyal to the core in his attachment to the principles of his Church, had doubts about the relations which the Reformed Presbyterian Church held to the State; and to him, therefore, I venture to say, more than any other of the ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, to him, first of all, is due the movement which ended in the relief of the Church from a position, perfectly sound and just at one time, but which, under the evolutions of Providence, had become untrue in point of fact, and unsound in principle. The result ultimately was not merely the emancipation of his Church from a prejudice, but the union of two Churches to the advantage and comfort of both.

If I were to exhibit my late friend in that aspect which endeared him most to all who knew him, you must be taken to see him privately and personally as a humble saint of God. His genial nature made him welcome in every family. His conversation was instructive, and always seasoned with grace. He could make generous allowance for human frailties in other men, while his moral indignation, without, however, the slightest tincture of malignity, could kindle up in a moment at all that was base and unworthy in thought and action. In converse, more intimate and confidential, the piety of the man came out with rare and solemnizing effect. It was the piety of principle, not of sentiment, or rather of sentiment all the more powerful that it was based on and guided by principle.

In my last interview with him, you felt how richly he had matured and mellowed in saintliness of experience and character for scenes of perfect light and love. If in the infirmity of nature his one foot was in the grave, you felt that all his heart was in heaven. It seemed to me the fitting close and culmination of a long series of such happy interviews, when alone—none present at least, but one, to be honoured for the affection and faithfulness with which she cherished and soothed him in the last years of his life—I sat by his death-bed, and listened, as with all the transparent candour of his nature he unbo-

somed to me briefly but clearly his experience and his hopes. "I have no ecstatic experience," he said, "but I have a firm hold." A firm hold of Christ ! Christ risen, ascended within the veil, living for us as truly in heaven as he died for us on earth ; our forerunner to glory—may such be your privilege and mine—in the solemn hour which came to your late pastor, which must come to us, when the shadows of death will fall on us ; and so shall the day break, and all shadows flee away before the light that reveals to us Christ, and restores to us all whom we have loved in Christ, rapt and rejoicing in the blessed fellowship of one everlasting home !

## EXTRACT MINUTES.

### THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD.

It was reported by the Presbytery of Glasgow—That the Rev. John M'Dermid departed this life on the 20th February last.

The Rev. Dr. Goold and Rev. John Inglis, were appointed a Committee to draw up an obituary notice, to be inserted in the Minutes. The notice drawn up is as follows:—

“ It is with no common sorrow that the Synod place on record their sense of the great loss which the Church has sustained in the recent death of their beloved and honoured brother, the Rev. John M'Dermid of Renwick Church, Glasgow. The event occurred on the 20th February, 1882, after a brief illness, and when he was within a few days of completing the 72nd year of his age. Licensed to preach the Gospel, 4th September, 1834, he received three calls—from Whithorn, Dundee, and Dumfries; and having accepted the last, he was ordained to the charge of the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation in that town on the 8th October, 1835. His high character, his peculiar resources of independent thought, his genial and brotherly temper, his thorough mastery of the genuine principles of his Church, with the clear and sagacious insight into the proper application of them, and the habitual prudence of his whole demeanour, soon won for him the confidence of his Church in the south of Scotland, as well as the respect of the whole community

in Dumfries. The charm in his preaching lay in a profound appreciation of evangelical principles, which he could expound and enforce with a rare freshness and thoughtfulness of illustration. The impression he produced was due, not to any special gift of fluency or eloquence, but to the weight with which his appeals came home to the conscience under the new and striking light in which truth and duty were presented. His growing influence in the Courts of the Church, from his uniform judiciousness and gentlemanly bearing, together with a singular dexterity in seizing, under the discussion of any important question, the real principle involved, and by which it fell to be decided, drew the eye of the Church upon him, and in 1855 he received a call to what came to be known as the Renwick Congregation in Glasgow. He was inducted into the charge of it on the 8th of November of that year. His anxious interest in the spiritual welfare of his flock, his sympathy with them in their perplexities and trials, his care in feeding them with sound instruction, the result of deep reflection on Scripture and the ways of God, and his earnestness in promoting every scheme tending to the advancement of religion, are features in his ministry deserving of grateful remembrance. Besides congregational duty, all movements and associations in favour of religion and the higher interests of the race enjoyed the benefit of his help and advocacy, and the large assemblage of Christians, of every Church, at his funeral, attested the extent to which his public services, as well as his personal worth, were appreciated. In the case of his own Church, peculiar gratitude is due to his memory for the skill and vigour and firmness which he infused into its policy and procedure, on memorable occasions of trial and difficulty. On such questions as the Elective Franchise and Union, his counsels were invaluable; and some of the most important documents in defence of the Church were from his pen. Warmly attached to all that was important and enduring in denominational views, and yet breathing at all times a spirit of warm catholicity,—so faithful, and



yet so kindly,—so generous, and willing to make allowance for the opinions and even the errors of other men, and yet so uncompromising where the interests of truth and principle were at stake,—so firm, and yet so unobtrusive in the maintenance of his positions,—so resolute in public duty, and yet so humbly devout, that the Courts of the Church have often been thrilled with the solemnity and unction of his prayers,—it cannot be wondered if Mr. M'Dermid was felt to be a tower of strength to the cause with which he was identified while he lived, and will long continue to live still in the memory of his brethren, as a bright and blessed example of ministerial worth and faithfulness. His wise, genial, and brotherly conduct to themselves, brings home a sense of his loss to them all with the keenness of a private and personal sorrow. They would unite, however, in blessing God for the gift of such a man, and the benefit of his lengthened ministry to the Church, and imploring grace that they may follow him as far as he followed Christ."

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### FREE PRESBYTERY OF GLASGOW.

#### MEMORIAL OF REV. JOHN M'DERMID.

"THE Rev. John M'Dermid of Renwick Church, who departed this life on the 20th of February last, was born in Glasgow on the 5th of March, 1810. His ancestors came from Lorne, and had an interesting religious history. More than a century ago a young woman named Campbell came from that district to Glasgow as a domestic servant, where she was brought to a saving knowledge of Christ Jesus. Anxious about the salvation of her relatives, she returned home to tell them the good news. Numbers were converted, and among those thus blessed was Mr. M'Dermid's grandfather. Ere long he and others found themselves "dissenters" against their

will. In course of time they applied for advice to some of the "Cameronian" ministers, who organized them into a kind of Home Mission Station. And from this little company there came afterwards no fewer than eight ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Of these Mr. M'Dermid was the last. Though born in Glasgow he spent his boyhood first at Renton and then at Milton near Bowling. His father died when he was about ten years of age, but God who is rich in mercy blessed him early. He was admitted to the membership of the Church in his sixteenth year. He entered the University of Glasgow about the same time. Afterwards he attended the Divinity Hall of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, presided over by Dr. Andrew Symington of Paisley. He was licensed in 1834, received three calls, and was ordained at Dumfries in 1835. His settlement proved a very happy one both for himself and the people. In 1855 he was translated to a newly-formed congregation in Glasgow, where he continued for the rest of his life to labour with much acceptance and blessing. Through the union of the Reformed Presbyterian with the Free Church in 1876, Mr. M'Dermid became a member of this Presbytery. He was a "man greatly beloved," genial, unpretentious, unselfish, and true-hearted. A devout, joyful, consistent Christian, he was full of love to all God's people. His preaching was always fresh, rich with fulness of Gospel truth and savour of Christ crucified and exalted. He often took part in the business of the Church Courts, but was never a partizan. He invariably thought for himself, and his opinions were always the fruit of honest conviction. Everything that concerned the social and religious welfare of the community interested him. Anderson's College, the Bible Society, Foreign Missions, the Temperance Cause, all found in him a friend and a helper. With great ability he pled for union among the Presbyterian Churches and expected great things therefrom. Not great things for himself, however, for he used to say, "Nothing as I am in my own little church I would be

less than nothing in a great one; but I would glory in becoming nothing, and less than nothing, if thereby I could in any degree exalt my Lord and Master, and make his name and his kingdom one in this old covenanted land." When the larger union could not be realized he very heartily advocated union with the Free Church, as he felt that on public questions of a politico-religious character his principles led him to harmonize with her more than with any other. But it is only in connection with such topics as "the Kingship of Christ" and "National Religion" that we get a full view of the man. He said on one occasion that the idea of the nation becoming "the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ," in fact and not merely in prospect, was a vision that ever floated before him, giving light in the darkest night and vigour in the weakest hour." Again, he said, "I testify it as my belief that as there is no Saviour for sinful man except the Lord Jesus Christ, and no religion that sanctifies and makes meet for heaven save the Christian religion, so there is no hope for the good government of the nations but in the reign of the man of God's right hand." Though removed unexpectedly, Mr. M'Dermid was not taken by surprise. During his ten days' illness he often spoke of his decease and of heaven where he hoped soon to be. The text of an unfinished sermon which he was writing when he laid down his pen shows how his thoughts were running (1st Cor., i. 7)—"Waiting for the coming of our Lord Christ." It was Christ to live; it is gain for him to have died; and it will be perfected bliss when his King comes in glory to inherit all nations. While mourning its own loss in his removal the Presbytery would at the same time place on record its sympathy with the family and congregation of their departed father and friend. May the God of all grace comfort and sustain them through Christ Jesus."

A. MELVILLE, *Pres. Clerk.*

## RENWICK KIRK SESSION.

AT Glasgow the 28th day of March, eighteen hundred and eighty-two years. The Kirk Session of Renwick Church met and was constituted—the Rev. John Edgar, A.M., interim moderator.

*Inter alia*—"The Session have to record their deep regret at the lamented death of their Moderator, the Rev. John M'Dermid, who has for so long a period presided over them. The feeling of each member of Session is, that in losing Mr. M'Dermid, they have lost a kind warm-hearted friend, whose counsels were always judicious and very highly valued.

As Moderator of Session Mr. M'Dermid constantly manifested the deepest interest in every member of the Congregation, always seeking after their highest good.

In all matters under deliberation, while freely expressing his own opinion, he was ever ready to receive with respect the opinion of others, his aim ever being to adopt such a course as would be for the welfare of the Congregation.

The Session record with gratitude the unbroken harmony that always prevailed under his presidency, and the warm affection with which he was regarded by every one of their number.

As a Pastor Mr. M'Dermid was a good example of his own high ideal of the pastoral office. He was instant in season and out of season. In sickness or distress he was ever ready to minister comfort and consolation, his ripe Christian experience well fitting him for this work.

His pulpit ministrations were highly appreciated, and that which gave them a living power over all who were privileged to listen to them, was above all his saintly character and holy life which was so constantly mani-

fested among his people. His death has left a blank which cannot be filled up, but the prayer of the Session is that the great Head of the Church may stir up all to follow in His footsteps."

Extracted from the Minutes of Renwick Church by

WALTER PATON, *Session Clerk.*

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## NATIONAL BIBLE SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND.

### WESTERN COMMITTEE.

GLASGOW, 27th February, 1882.

*Inter alia*—"The Secretary intimated the death on the 20th current of the Rev. John M'Dermid, of Renwick Church, who, since 1860, had been a Director of this Society, whereupon the following Minute was unanimously adopted and ordered to be engrossed in the records of the Society:—

"In the death of the Rev. John M'Dermid the National Bible Society of Scotland has lost one of its most attached and honoured friends. Called in 1860 along with the late Rev. Dr. Symington to represent the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the Western Board, he continued to render important service in the direction of the Society's affairs during the long period of twenty-one years.

"Mr. M'Dermid was specially interested in the China and Japan Agencies. He was one of the Sub-Committee which in 1868 recommended the appointment of Mr. Robert Lilley for work in the East; and with his dying hand he traced a few lines only twelve days before his death, to express regret at his inability to attend a meeting for conference with Mr. Lilley on the affairs of his agency in Japan.

"The experience gained by Mr. M'Dermid during his

lengthened connection with the Society, his exemplary regularity in attendance on its meetings, and his intelligent interest in all that concerned its welfare, combined, with the native force of character, the shrewd and independent judgment, the geniality and considerateness by which he was distinguished, to give Mr. M'Dermid a high place in the counsels of the Society and in the esteem of his fellow-directors.

"Under the earnest aspect of the man with whom fidelity to principle, and convictions of truth and duty were a part of himself, there lay not far concealed in him whose loss is mourned to-day, a child-like disposition, a generous sympathetic nature, a womanly tenderness—'Out of the strong came forth sweetness.'

"Of the colleagues with whom Mr. M'Dermid took office in 1860 only eight now survive. It is natural to exclaim, as the past is thus reviewed,—'The fathers, where are they? the prophets, do they live for ever?' But in unworthy regret, no uncertain hope need find a place in this retrospect. They who thus sleep, do well. 'They rest from their labours and their works do follow them.' May they who in their stead are now called to bear the burden and heat of the day, lose the sense of weakness and of weariness in the Divine strength and hope which animated those who have gone before, that, partakers with them in their faith and patience they may, ere long, share with them their rest and their reward.

"Agreed in adopting this minute that a copy be sent to the widow and son of the deceased, with an expression of the Directors' warm sympathy with them in their great loss.

Extracted from the Minutes.

WILLIAM J. SLOWAN,  
*Western Secretary.*

## THE DIGNITY, DUTY, AND LIMITS OF BUSINESS.\*

“Not slothful in business.”—ROM., xii. 11.

BUSINESS is a term of high respectability ; and at present is, as it ought to be, associated with the most dignifying sentiments. If ever there was a time or state of society, when anything like degradation or meanness was supposed to attach to it, that time and that state of society have altogether passed away. There may not, indeed, be in the word, *business*, anything properly or distinctively aristocratic, or suggestive of aristocratic associations. But humble and plebeian though its origin may be, it has risen up among us to a truly patrician rank and dignity : and that individual would now be ridiculed, as holding the most pedantic ideas of nobility, or be laughed at as a fool, who would attempt any airs, or express himself in any style that went to throw out the slightest insinuation against the respectability and dignity of business.

Business, it is true, is a word of a wide and very general signification, and may be applied to any of the multifarious occupations of human life. Whatever a man is employed about, that, in a general way, is his business. But perhaps the term more particularly calls up to most minds the departments of trade, of commerce, and of merchandise, in its manifold ramifications ; and when we think of the multitudes who are engaged in these departments, as well as their position and influence in society, we cannot wonder at the honourable ideas that the term business awakens in the mind, nor at the ambitious aspirations that

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the mention of it may sometimes kindle in the bosom of the youth who has just taken his start in the important race of human life : for it is not only in the walks of philosophy, and poetry, and literature, and the fine arts, and in what are called the different learned professions, that scope is given to the workings of an honourable ambition. There is ample room for it also in the high walks of business—of business in all its departments; and perhaps it were better if there was more of that dignity, more of that glory, more of that halo which kindles the aspirations of generous youth, thrown around business—better, both for the honour of business itself, and for the dignity, in the highest sense of the term, of those engaged in it.

In a country such as ours, where trade is carried on to such a marvellous extent, where business is conducted on a scale so magnificent—where our merchants become princes, and our traffickers become the honourable of the earth, and where there are no legal or conventional hindrances to the very humblest rising to the very highest pinnacle of the social edifice, it is evident that, next to personal religion, and good morals, and an enlightened education, nothing can be more valuable to any young man than to be trained to thorough and sound habits of business. Compared to business habits and business skill, and business energy, the inheritance of a title, or of ancestral renown, is not once to be named.

Nor are such habits valuable only to those who are to be employed in directly cultivating the varied, and often, though not by any means always productive, fields that spread themselves out to the view of the man of business. Such habits are intrinsically valuable, and are of vast service to every one, whatever his rank, whatever his profession, whatever the sphere in which he moves. And it is one thing, among many others, that marks out the respectability attaching to business and the lessons we might all learn from it, without any loss, either of dignity or sanctity, that when we wish to convey the idea of any affair, ecclesiastical or civil, being conducted in the wisest, the most judicious, the most orderly, the most accurate, I



had almost said, the best possible manner, we speak of it as being managed in a truly business style. .

No doubt, business may assume to itself a place and a pre-eminence it is by no means entitled to hold, as we will come by and by more particularly to see. It may take greatly too firm, and too exclusive a hold of the mind, and far too much absorb its energies and the time demanded for other purposes. And when it does so it degrades itself, because business then becomes a tyrant, and reduces those engaged in it to the condition of slaves; and both tyranny and slavery are degrading, and as such detestable. Business may also be degraded by being conducted on low, mean, despicable, not to say immoral principles. It is anything but dignified, however lucrative the results may be, where nothing higher appears as the impelling motive than what is mercenary and selfish; for to impart true dignity to any pursuit, there must be something generous and noble in the motive that is urging you forward in it.

Still further, business may be shorn of the true glory we delight to throw around it, by converting it into something like a splendid lucrative game, or an alluring lottery where prizes are to be drawn, and where space and scope are given, not so much to pursue a career of honourable and hopefully remunerative exertion, as for the gratification of the passion of covetousness, which hastens to be rich, which resolves at all hazards upon being rich, without being at all scrupulous as to the means by which this resolution is to be realized. The effect of plunging headlong, and without forethought, into business as into a game of chance, where, by some successful stroke, a fortune may happen to be made all at once, where the scheme is such as either to be rapid and disastrous ruin or speedy and splendid success, and where unbridled indulgence is given to the most rash and reckless spirit of speculation, has a most withering effect upon the mind, mentally and morally, making it light, frivolous, and withal unprincipled, if it does not plunge it into the deepest misery and distress; and tends exceedingly to

bring business itself into disrepute and dishonour. It is to be hoped that the frightful disclosures which have been made of late in certain great mercantile transactions, disclosures which ought, perhaps, to be looked upon as the result of business passing from the sobriety and vigour of health to the madness, the altogether unnatural excitement of high fever. It is to be hoped that the appalling discoveries that have been made, so discreditable in every way to the mercantile world, will operate as a warning, and prove a beacon to all who are employed in the pursuit of business in time to come, when it is seen that by such revelations as these the finger of Providence itself points out that if business has its dignities, its duties, its rights, it has also its limits, which may not, which cannot be, with impunity, overpassed.

But although from these and similar causes, unscrupulous mercenaries—and even odium may be charged upon business—yet evidently the charge does not apply to business itself, but to the wrong principles on which, in such cases, it is conducted—principles by no means inherent in it or inseparably connected with it. Disgraceful business transactions, when they occur, or disgraceful modes and systems of prosecuting business, are no more discreditable to business itself than disgraceful conduct on the part of professors of our pure and most holy faith is discreditable to that faith itself. As we are to criminate and condemn not Christianity when it is dishonoured by its professors, but those who are inconsistent and inglorious enough to involve it in reproach, so we are to criminate and condemn not business but the unworthy hands that manage it, when any course is pursued that is undignified and mean.

Business itself must be rescued and redeemed from all degradation, and be raised, even by the hand of the Christian preacher to the dignified position it may well demand; and it rejoices our heart to acknowledge that there are thousands and thousands more throughout our land acting in the different departments of business who are themselves highly honourable and Christian men, and

whose affairs are conducted in a creditable degree upon honourable and dignifying principles, and who are very ready to respond to any movement that may be made for rectifying what may be amiss, and for bringing the social system into that condition that may be most conducive to the comfort, the well-being, the moral, and the religious improvement of all who compose it.

It is now time to observe that there appertains to business, not only the dignity that it naturally achieves for itself in a country where tens of thousands, by means of it, rise to stations of affluence and commanding influence, and where thousands and tens of thousands more enjoy, through the profits it yields, comfort and usefulness in an humbler though in many cases not less happy sphere. I say there appertains to business, not only the respectability that it naturally achieves for itself in a country where all this is going on every day and every hour, but likewise the dignity that arises from its being recognised by God himself, the Maker and Ruler of this world, in the revelation he has given of his will to men; and by its being not only recognised there, but made the subject of explicit command, "Not slothful in business."

The Bible always appears to us to dignify whatever it touches, to raise and elevate whatever it condescends to acknowledge. And, if it be true that its grand and ultimate purpose is to reveal to us immortality and eternal life through the Mediatorship of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is no less true that it throws the shadow of this immortality over man's mortal existence, and by connecting the present with the future, the temporal with the eternal, it casts a sanctity, and stamps a dignity, and gives a substantiality to life's pursuits, which they never otherwise can be felt to possess, and the prosecution of these pursuits is felt to be ennobling, when in the midst of them we are consciously surrounded by what is religious and divine.

I deem it rather necessary to communicate this feeling at present, as I am not without apprehension that some may reckon the theme on which I am lecturing as being,

though dignified enough in a worldly sense, yet not invested with the dignity derived from the Bible. They may conceive it to be devoid of the sanctity and solemnity that befit our present circumstances. They may allow it to be suitable enough for a week evening, but hardly appropriate to the evening of the Sabbath.

Now, brethren, in the remarks about business that I have made or may yet make, I do not, be assured, forget that this is the evening of the Lord's day, or that I am in the Lord's house, with the word of the Lord open before me—that word which is to guide our conduct as well as regulate our faith. If any suppose that, though I may not be going the length of desecrating, I am at least secularizing the Sabbath and the sanctuary, by the occupation of your minds with such a theme, or that I am allowing the sanctity and spirituality of religion to evaporate while engrossing myself, and attempting to engross you, with such a vulgar and every-day topic as human business. If any suppose this, I could meet them, I think, with more replies than one; but the only reply I shall make at present is that business is a Bible subject, a subject that the Bible does not look at distantly and haughtily as if it were afraid to demean itself by holding any conference with it, or giving any counsel with regard to it; on the contrary, it takes it deliberately up, pronounces what is right and wrong in regard to its performance, rouses to diligence in attending to it, warns against the opposite evil of slothfulness; assigns also the reasons that should prompt us to the diligence it enjoins. Surely, then, it cannot be indecorous, or unbefitting the sanctity of any Sabbath or any sanctuary to attempt to bring the divine law of the Bible into actual practice, in such an extensive department of man's affairs on the earth, as passes under the name of business.

It is striking and very fitted to arouse one out of that torpor and lethargy that are so apt to steal over us, just to observe how frequently, and in what unfaltering tones, the Bible pronounces condemnation on the slothful. In regard to the exercises of religion, and the interests of

the soul and eternity, as might be expected, it exhorts us to diligence, and warns us against sloth—"And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Heb. vi. 11, 12. "Wherefore the rather brethren (says Peter), give diligence to make your calling and election sure." As Christians we are neither to be idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; but, besides having faith, to be giving all diligence, adding to faith fortitude, and to fortitude knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness charity. For it is when we give diligence to make our calling and election sure, by thus increasing our virtue and adorning ourselves with the beauties of holiness, that we will be preserved from falling, and that we will have an entrance ministered abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Christian vocation then, is not an idle or a slothful one. In all the departments of it, diligence is enjoined; we are to seek God with diligence, and he is promised to be the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. We are to keep our hearts with all diligence; for out of it, we are taught, are the issues of life. Diligence is enjoined in connection with the duty of family instruction, of domestic teaching. "These words that I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." Rulers are to rule with diligence. "He that ruleth let him do it with diligence." In fact, diligently following every good work is mentioned as the most beautiful and lovely feature of the people of God. There is no work, it would appear, worth being done at all, that is not worth being done with diligence, done with our might.

But not only does the Bible anathematize slothfulness within what many might account its own peculiar domain, the domain of spiritual feeling and religious duty,

but it speaks out in the same denunciatory tone regarding slothfulness within the domain of human life,—within the inclosures that bound human interests and human pursuits; or rather, perhaps, we should say, in this connection it breaks down, or pays no regard to such fences and boundaries as are supposed to separate the spiritual from the secular, and warns the Christian as authoritatively and imperatively against slothfulness in business as slothfulness in religion.

The wisest of men in those admirable proverbs, with which it were well every young man's mind was stored, for though they be old, and were given forth during what may be called the olden condition of society, they are yet young, and in their principles and spirit, in every way adapted to these modern ages,—Solomon tells us that he becometh poor who dealeth with a slack hand, while the hand of the diligent maketh rich; that the hand of the diligent shall bear rule, while the slothful shall be under tribute. "See'st thou a man (he asks) diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings: he shall not stand before mean men." He sends the slothful for quickening and instruction to the insect tribe. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise, who having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." He classifies the sluggish with the extravagant; "He that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." Ch. xviii. 9. And he pictures forth the vineyard of the slothful in terms that are fitted to cover him with shame.

And there are very sufficient reasons why slothfulness in business should be portrayed in all its most offensive and shameful colours, and why it should be exhibited so as, if possible, to excite a universal loathing and detestation. For it is the source, when indulged in, the prolific source of the saddest personal, domestic, and social evils. Poverty travails in its train, and want, like an armed man, lays its withering and terrible grasp on such. On the other hand, the industry and diligence that are op-

posed to sloth and listlessness are the springs of an honourable independence, and of personal, domestic, and social comfort; they likewise originate those resources whereby we are enabled not only to maintain ourselves and our household respectably, but to taste the God-like blessedness of giving to him that needeth, and generally of patronizing and promoting everything that is good, of practising those good works towards the household of faith, and to all men, which in Scripture are everywhere commanded.

What we have up to this point been saying relative to the dignity of business, and to the duty of prosecuting it with diligence, may perhaps appear incompatible with that movement for diminishing the hours generally allotted to business, which has sprung up within these few years, in this as well as in all parts of the country, and which, we are happy to think, is constantly gathering strength. In reality, however, there is no inconsistency between any observations we have made and the interests of this important movement. There is no collision between early shop-shutting, as it is called, and the due dignity and duty of business. Not only is there no collision, but there is the most complete concord. For ourselves, at any rate, though always entertaining the sentiments we have just been expressing relative to business, we have yet hailed from the very outset this attempt to curtail business hours, as the dawn among us of great social improvement.

It will be granted by all, whatever may have been the practice that has prevailed, that business must have some limits, that some bounds must be set to it; that it is not quite the thing for filling up the whole of man's time, for engrossing the whole of his attention, for absorbing all his energies.

Business surely, however dignified it may be, and however energetically its duties are to be performed, is not to run through the entire of our existence—is not to be accounted the *summum bonum* of human life. It must be kept within reasonable and moderate bounds, and

ample and clear space must be reserved beyond these bounds, whereon we may have room for the discharge of other, and we shall venture even already to add *higher* duties.

Does any one say that this is sufficiently secured by the intervention of the Sabbath that comes round once every seven days—and that there is no need for any other restriction upon business—for any other barrier being erected against its encroachments, than the sacred one that has been secured by divine appointment, in the enactment of the holy Sabbath as a day during which there is to be an entire cessation from every kind of secular employment.

We most willingly and thankfully acknowledge the obligations under which we all lie for the rest of the Sabbath day, and for the freedom from business and from toil which it brings, or ought to bring, along with it. It is, indeed, the erection of a great and grand boundary over which human business should never pass. It is a divine fence that should be held sacred. And that man knows not what he does—knows not the injury he is inflicting upon himself and his fellow-men, and on posterity, to say nothing of the dishonour he is casting upon his God, who by word or deed, directly or indirectly, countenances or connives at the violation of the rest of the Sabbath. He is trampling down, for one thing, the most stable, the most sacred, and one of the strongest boundaries that has ever been reared against the inroads of unmitigated worldliness—against the universal engrossment of the human mind with matters of business, and against the selfishness and tyranny that would inevitably rear their horrid heads as the progeny of such a state of things. He who alienates the Sabbath from the purpose for which God gave it to man, and converts it into uses of his own, though he may do so thoughtlessly, and without explicit intent, is yet implicitly and really sinking man down to a mere human machine, to a mere creature of earth, I had almost said to a mere beast of burden, and thus quenching within him every aspiration that has



a bearing on immortality. For, if the secular labours of the six days of the week show that we belong to the world, and have important duties in it to perform, the spiritual duties of the seventh day show that we belong to another world, and stand in vital and most important relations to it. If the former shows that one sphere in which we are called upon to move, is that of serving God upon earth, the latter indicates that another sphere for which we are fitted, and for which we ought to be preparing ourselves, is that of serving God in heaven. The Sabbath, one might say, constitutes a sort of intermediate ground between earth and heaven, whereon the two are brought into most delightful fellowship, elevating us to a position in which we are raised above time and temporal objects, and bringing us within view of eternity and things unseen—giving us, at once, a season of refreshment, of repose, of rest from earthly employments, and of active preparation for heavenly ones; and thus exhibiting a vivid image of the period when our weak, wearied, fatigued, and mortal bodies shall be exchanged for those that are strong, incorruptible, glorious, immortal.

The Sabbath, then, we readily allow, presents a noble and enduring barrier, confronting and resisting every attempt that may be made to realize an order of things in which man's *mortal* existence was all about him, that should be taken into account—in which he would be looked upon only as an inhabitant of earth, and serving no other or higher purpose than that of ministering to the convenience or comfort of those around him. And every advocate of early shop-shutting, every advocate of any sort of intellectual, or moral, or social improvement, if he were wise, and wished to be strong and triumphant, will hold the Sabbath in all its integrity, and make it his stronghold, his castle, whither he resorts when attacked, to renew his energy, and from which alone he can come forth clad, at once, with the armour of earth and of heaven, to make aggressions upon every sentiment, or usage, or custom, that stands in hostile opposition to human advancement.

But there is hardly any one, we should think, who would seriously insist upon having no other limitations thrown around the intrusions of business except the protection afforded, or that ought to be afforded, by the Sabbath. It may with all safety be affirmed that those who are most alive to the value of the Sabbath as a social good, and who are most solicitous and earnest about having it shielded against all the incursions of secular business; in other words, those who are most concerned that every one should enjoy liberty from labour on the day that God has appointed for rest will always be found to demand limits being assigned to labour, even during those days of the week on which business may be lawfully and dutifully followed.

There are other weighty interests and high duties belonging to human life, even on the civil and secular days of the week, besides those that pertain to business.

First of all, as standing at the very head, it seems not unnecessary, but on every account proper to mention the high duty of daily cultivating *Personal Religion*. Though religion be pre-eminently the work—the business—of the Sabbath, yet it is by no means to be confined to it. It is to pervade and influence our week-day lives as well as our Sabbath-day life. What is it, you ask, to be personally religious? It is just to be living in personal friendship with God—to be living a life in which God and we are agreed, and therefore in which we walk together holding mutual fellowship—He making himself known to us as our Creator, Father, Law-giver, Governor, Judge—we endeavouring to act out the duties and cherish the sentiments and emotions springing out of these high relations, so that our lives are framed on the principle of making God their chief and supreme end. The great practical principle which regulates them is the high and stupendous one, propounded by the Apostle in these words: “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,”—a principle, to endeavour to observe which, every right-minded individual will feel not only to be his highest duty but his highest

dignity. The Christian religion lays a foundation for this life of holy friendship with God in the atoning, reconciliatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus ; and it moreover provides for the rearing of its superstructure by the revelation of the Mediatorial work of Christ in Heaven, as our Great High Priest, whereby we have always access to God ; and also by communicating the Holy Ghost to our souls, through whose internal and sanctifying agency we are enabled to live the spiritual and divine life of fellowship with God.

Now, although such a life as this may appear exceedingly beautiful and simple when contemplated as a mere sentiment, and although its claims may be readily assented to as a mode of life supremely rational and desirable, yet, in point of fact, arising from the frightful hostility there is to the actual dominion of God in the soul, and to the whole system of life that this dominion supposes and implies—arising also from the opposition there is to the reign of God, in the breasts of others around us, and in the course of this world's affairs generally—arising, I say, from causes like these—a life of friendship with God is one that cannot be maintained without serious labour and terrible conflict—such labour and conflict, as will be found altogether incompatible with the entire engrossment of the mind during the six days of the week with any business whatever, no matter how lawful that business may be in itself. Not only is some little time necessary on week-days for the cultivation of personal religion, but there must be some unexpended energy about the constitution to capacitate it for such an employment. And even though there may be some such energy remaining, though it may not have been utterly and entirely exhausted, yet if it be reduced to the lowest possible degree, there is a great temptation (though of course it is imperative on us to counteract it) of postponing such serious and difficult work to some imagined more convenient season. Everything about the practice of the Christian religion, even when confined to what is personal, implies thought, the exercise of reason, the

exercise of the various powers of the soul ; there is, in fact, more of what is mental involved in the Christian life than any other religion supposes. It is difficult then to conceive how the Christian life can be matured and developed amidst the entire occupation of the mind, and day after day, with matters wholly worldly.

Before passing from calling your attention to those limitations of business, on business days, that are implied in the demands that personal religion daily makes upon us, we may appropriately enough conjoin with these all the other duties we owe to ourselves, such as the duty of promoting our own mental and moral improvement, of cultivating our minds, of acquiring useful knowledge—historical, philosophical, or scientific, and generally qualifying ourselves for prosecuting, to some extent, intellectual pursuits, and partaking of intellectual pleasures. Nor must we here omit to mention the duty devolving upon us, of attending to bodily health, and seeking after and cultivating a sense of the simple and innocent pleasures that may be enjoyed in walking abroad for a little over the face of God's earth, and under the blue canopy that covers our heads, and beholding the wonders, at once minute and mighty, that he has so richly and magnificently spread out before us. We are very thoroughly, I had almost said sensitively, aware that much that is sickly, sentimental, puerile, may be spoken with reference to this. Surely, however, no one will deny that pleasures like these are lawful, that they are necessary, that they are healthful—healthful both to body and mind—yet they cannot be enjoyed, without some time, more or less, the necessity for which time demonstrates business to have its limits as well as its duties and its rights.

And here let us observe, that there is evidently something sadly unsound in the system on which business is conducted, and demanding speedy remedy, when any of our young artisans at a tender age and most critical period of life, and when our juvenile apprentices, to shops and houses of business of various kinds, cannot be got hold of, either in the family or to any class of intel-

lectual or Christian instruction, till a very late hour in the evening. When, for example, a minister of the gospel holds a weekly evening meeting, for the improvement of young men, at so late an hour as eight o'clock: and when he finds that not a few cannot attend even at this hour, though they might perhaps desire to do so, it is unspeakably mortifying, and is felt by him to be a great hindrance to his usefulness. And one's mortification is enhanced to the highest, when it is known to be wholly unnecessary—when it is known that we have plenty of hands to supply all the wants of the community within reasonable hours; and it is surely much better that all should be employed within hours that are moderate and reasonable, than that some should be idle and unoccupied, and actually unable to procure work, while others have their energies overtaken, or at any rate, their time entirely absorbed.

But, besides personal, there are domestic duties which demand time, and which, of course, in order to their being performed, demand limits to be assigned to the hours of business. There are duties which the husband owes to his wife, and the wife to her husband; the parent to the child, and the child to the parent; the brother to the sister, and the sister to the brother, under the domestic roof, and around the domestic hearth, which cannot be discharged anywhere else. There must be time allotted for family duties and domestic enjoyments, as well as time for the duties of business and the enjoyments of general society, if we are to have a social system sound and virtuous.

Amidst the manifold machinery put into operation in the present day, for working beneficially upon society—for removing the mischiefs, or curing the maladies under which it is groaning—the domestic constitution is apt to be cast into the shade. The family economy, however, it should never be forgotten, is something divine; having upon it the stamp of divine authority, and infinite wisdom, and of everlasting obligation, while other appliances are merely human and imperfect, and adapted only to

special exigencies. Yet man is very apt to be more pleased, and fascinated, and enamoured, with his own contrivances, which are often paraded with much pomp and circumstance, than with the contrivances of God, which are generally exceedingly simple and unostentatious, though exceedingly effective.

The power and influence of the domestic economy, much as it may be talked of, is but rarely considered as it ought. Wives and mothers do not in many cases lay themselves out to make their homes sweet and happy, by studying neatness and comfort and those little outward household attractions that all feel to be agreeable—above all, by studying sweetness of temper, serenity of disposition, and that frank, open, confiding love, and kindness, whereby genial light and warmth are diffused all around them. Husbands and fathers again are often shamefully culpable in being seldom in the midst of their families, in not making companions and friends of their own households, in either being absent altogether from the domestic circle, or while there, sour, and churlish, and petulant, and irritable. In like manner, sons and daughters often appear to despise, as tame and unexciting, the tranquil enjoyments of the domestic circle, and may be found flitting about from house to house, and from one scene of excitement to another, hunting after enjoyment, when it would be infinitely better for themselves, and the families of which they are members, and society at large, were they at home doing its simple duties, and partaking of its soothing, and, where matters are as they ought to be, its sanctifying enjoyments.

It cannot be doubted, that not a little in the customs and usages of society is adverse to the recognition of that high respect which is due to the domestic constitution, as at once the best nursery of religion and virtue, and the most powerful instrument of social reformation and advancement. It cannot be doubted, for instance, that the notions which have prevailed, and are still current concerning business—*notions that invest its claims with a sort of supremacy*, have often furnished a respectable

apology to heads of families and young men in absenting themselves from their households till late at night, and in neglecting entirely to discharge the duties within the domestic sphere that God and nature have been demanding of them. Business, as the phrase goes, must be attended to. It is a small matter, in the estimation of many who sometimes use this phrase with a good deal of the feeling of proud superiority over, and supercilious contempt towards, those who are not, as they deem, occupied with matters so urgent as themselves—it is a small matter though there be no domestic intercourse, though there be no reciprocation of feeling between the father and his family, though the warmheartedness of friendship never enlivens the family fire-side, fusing the souls of its members into one, and binding them together in the happiest and best of bonds, that of mutual affection, though there be no domestic readings or domestic devotion, and though the fire on the family altar be suffered to languish and expire. All these may be neglected and hardly thought of, but *business*, the supreme thing, must be attended to, and perhaps the person who thus acts, thinks, or tries to make himself think, that he is thus providing for his family and consulting their best interests. Ah, what madness! No accumulations of wealth can compensate for the neglect of the proper cultivation of the domestic charities. Such a person, however, is only deluding himself. In all probability he is only cloaking worldliness and sin, perhaps sensuality, with a respectable phrase. Every one who has the serious responsibility of a household hanging over his head, should throw away these sinful and delusive notions, and set about so regulating his business and everything else (even though temporal and other kinds of sacrifice require to be made) as that he may be able to give his best and most prayerful endeavours towards realizing for the church and the community all that religion, virtue, happiness, and capability of usefulness, which may be looked for as the results and the rewards of enlightened, firm, patient and affectionate family government.

Even personal and domestic duties, however, though occupying a first and fundamental place, do not by any means exhaust the enumeration that might be made. We stand related to neighbours and friends ; and, to the cultivation of true, solid friendships, of Christian converse and sociality, by the mutual interchange of mind with mind, of thought with thought, where the necessary degree of congeniality exists, we attach no little importance. We will never consent to look upon such friendly reciprocations as merely an agreeable manner of whiling away an idle hour ; giving thereby the idea that a proper amount of mental energy would have led to the filling up of that hour more profitably by attention to some piece of important business. To mere talk, indeed, mere story-telling, mere social chat about the trifling incidents that are occurring around us, in which there is the utterance of no sentiment that penetrates the soul and becomes henceforth a part of it, we do not attach much value, though even this sort of small-talk cannot be altogether despised. But that kind of social friendly intercourse in which, in connexion with converse on outward matters, there is an exchanging of the sentiments and workings of the inner man, and a free confidential examination of these on all their sides, accompanied with an utterance of a judgment as to their nature and quality, is not surely to be lightly estimated. It always appears to us as if this kind of intercourse held a place second only to religion ; and indeed, in some minds, it is to be feared it takes the place of religion.

We are related, moreover, to the general community, as well as to neighbours and friends, and have services to perform to the sick, the bereaved, the distressed, and likewise to the ignorant, the careless, the profligate, as well as towards those benevolent and charitable institutions that exist among us, for performing all which duties there ought to be time—time, after all the just demands of business have been satisfied.

Perhaps after all this you will enquire, what time then would you have us give to business ? What are the limits



that ought to be assigned to it? How many hours a-day ought business to occupy us? I frankly confess I am not qualified to give a definite answer to these questions. I would reckon it presumptuous in me to do so. I have to do, in this place, and at this time, only with general principles; and my aim, accordingly, has been just to make it generally to appear that there are such a variety of weighty interests and duties demanding our attention, even on the business days of the week, as renders it indispensable that our shops and warehouses should be shut up at an earlier hour than they have heretofore been: in other words, that the moral and religious interests of the community at large, and of the individuals and families of which it consists, require that the hours given to business should be considerably shortened.

Permit me, in conclusion, just to remind one and all of you, old and young, master and servant, whatever be your vocation in life, whatever be the business that is occupying you from day to day, and whether the hours, in which you are engaged, be longer or shorter, that there is one business that on no account you must neglect—the business of making sure your interests for eternity, of making sure that you have accepted the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory, and that you are daily working out your salvation with fear and trembling —“What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” Or “what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

*One* thing is needful. *One* business must be attended to. Everything must be subordinated to this. For ourselves we advisedly say, that we do not expect any really valuable revolution to take place in the affairs of this world, till men, reconciled to God, through Jesus Christ, are led *First* to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and everything else as secondary and subordinate to this.

## HOURS WITH HOLY SCRIPTURE.\*

" Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."—1 PETER I. 1, 2.

THE contrariety that too often exists between the judgment of God and the judgment of man—between the light in which things are looked upon by Heaven, and the light in which they are looked upon on earth—might be largely and strikingly illustrated out of the materials contained in the inscription of this first Epistle of Peter.

Carried back by it, some 1800 years, to the times when the Gospel was just entering upon its grand mission, we are made to look upon a number of singular individuals, scattered throughout several provinces that lay to the south of the Black Sea, as they must have been viewed by their contemporaries generally, and as they were viewed by an apostle of Christ. By the mass of the population, among whom they were dispersed, these peculiar persons would not be reckoned the wise, the mighty, the noble, the thoughtful, the good, the truly pious of their age, but the foolish, the weak, the wrong-headed, unworthy of no treatment but that of derision and scorn, and unnecessarily exposing themselves to the loss of liberty, of property, of citizenship, yea, even of life.

It is certainly known that not long after the time when this epistle was sent to these "pilgrims and strangers," one of the provinces throughout which they were "scattered" was governed by a pro-consul, distinguished alike for his learning and humanity. In writing to the Emperor Trajan about the Christians who came under his cognizance as a provincial ruler, he confesses he does not know what to make of them, chargeable as they were with the

\* Contributed to the *Reformed Presbyterian Magazine* in 1867 by the Rev. John M'Dermid.

crime of deserting the time-honoured temples of their fathers, and forsaking their ancestral worship. It seems, however, that this estimable and mild ruler entertained no doubt that if these obstinate Christians clung pertinaciously to their faith, and refused to disown Jesus and acknowledge the gods, they deserved torture and death.

How altogether different the light in which the same class of persons appear to the eye of an apostle, who, so to speak, has been admitted within the vail, and has been led to look upon such in the light of the Divine counsels in the resplendent light of heaven. The contrast between Pliny and Peter, between the Roman pro-consul and the apostle of Christ, as to the light in which they respectively looked upon the same persons, is very striking. However they may be viewed by the eloquent and learned Roman, in the eye of the apostle, feeling warmly towards them "in the bowels of Jesus Christ," they are God's elect, adopted children of their heavenly Father, heirs of an eternal inheritance, consecrated to God by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and the sprinkling of the precious blood of Christ; whereby they were marked out as persons who would be preserved and saved, when those who had not been sprinkled with this Divine blood would perish under the avenging stroke of Divine justice.

This inscription, however, is remarkable as not only revealing the sacred dignity with which Christians were beheld by an apostolic eye—so different from the light in which they were looked upon by the world,—but as containing a recognition of a good many of the profoundest doctrines of godliness. This inscription is rich in doctrinal value. Looking at it with a theological eye, we have a recognition of the deep doctrines of election—of the mysteries of the Divine prescience—of the agency and work of the Spirit in our sanctification, together with the fundamental doctrine of the atonement, in its bearing upon the conscience of the sinner, as well as in its bearing upon the holiness and justice of God.

This inscription, moreover, has a practical aspect that is surely calculated to arrest one. The attitude of the

Christian on whom the eye of the apostle rests with such heavenly interest is, as here exhibited, that of *obedience*. The Christian is one who obeys God. This is the end of his election, of God's foreknowledge concerning him, of his consecration with the Spirit, of his sprinkling with the blood of Christ.

"Elect . . . unto obedience."

The obedience here pointed to has in it the various elements that enter into the dutifulness of the child, the fidelity of the servant, the sincerity of the friend, the loyalty of the subject, the gratitude of the recipient of favours.

What an exalted position he occupies who has become thoroughly obedient to God ! In one sense it is a lowly position ; the false sentiment that self-will produces may even tempt us to regard it as a degrading one ; but it is not so. It is a high and a lofty position. Man was made to obey God. Even in those spheres in which he legitimately rules, his rule is to be regulated by the law of God, otherwise it becomes tyranny ; as, on the other hand, in those spheres where his province is to obey, his obedience is to be in subordination to the will of God, otherwise it becomes slavery. It is in obeying God, through Jesus Christ, and by the strength of the Holy Spirit, that we will all find at once our dignity, our liberty, our happiness. When obeying God we feel as if we were fellow-workers with himself, or rather as if he were working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure ; and the feeling of this has in it an enjoyment and an elevation altogether divine. We are thereby brought into communion with all those holy beings throughout the universe in whom God is working, and through whom he is executing his high and most blessed will. It is in the believer being brought to obey God, that the electing love of the Father, and the redeeming work of the Son, and the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, have their accomplishment.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

—1 PETER i. 3-5.

HOWEVER deserving of perusal may be many of the learned volumes on the Christian religion to be found in our libraries, and however agreeable may be the reading of the lesser and lighter volumes that are in constant and extensive circulation throughout religious society, yet it is sometimes refreshing to turn from those altogether, and put ourselves, without note or comment, into simple and direct communication with a veritable Scripture, claiming to have been written with the pen, and pervaded with the feelings of one who saw the Lord, who heard him speak, and who was among the twelve chosen by Jesus himself to be his apostles to the world. Such a communication we undoubtedly have in the precious document over a portion of whose contents we are seeking to spend a profitable hour. It opens with these simple but majestic words that one loves to look upon and think of as stamping with such reality and significance all that follows, "*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.*"

Not that Peter claims for himself, in virtue of being an apostle, any higher order of Christian experience than was reached by those to whom he wrote, and who had "obtained like precious faith with himself." The very reverse. He recognises at once, in the rich stream of devout gratitude he here pours forth, the common fellowship of believers—their common faith, their common hope. The things for which he blesses God are not the things that lift the apostles to a pre-eminence over the Christian brotherhood in general, but rather the things that the apostles and believers have in common. Peter evidently exults in this community of fellowship. It is in no reluctant or grudging, but in the most generous and

cordial spirit, that he uses the pronoun "us," as including all God's elect, equally with himself, in this ascription of praise.

Looking upon these verses as of the nature of a Christian hymn, in which the noblest Christian experience is celebrated, there are two or three features of this experience worthy of devout attention :—

1. It is distinctively Christian. It is not only the experience of a Christian, but *Christian* experience. A Christian may pass through many mental changes, and may have many conflicts in his moral nature between what is evil and good, that are compatible enough with Christianity, but that cannot be said to be *distinctive* of it. If we wish to ascertain the genuineness of our Christian experience, we must not be satisfied with discovering within ourselves a number of thoughts, and feelings, and struggles that other Christians have had, but that many have had who were not Christians. We must rigidly demand those states of mind, and those religious exercises, that are never experienced except where Christ is living in the soul as the hope of glory. Well, if we look at these verses as in a glass, we will find that they reveal to us an experience that no soul ever tastes, except as a result of being "born from above." This will appear the moment we try to read them as expressive of an individual faith and hope, and as the utterance of our own actual feelings.

2. The absence of all that is vague and indefinite, and the clear presence of truth that has an existence, independent of the exercises of any individual mind, is another striking feature in the religious experience here developed. This is not an outburst of what is called the religious sentiment, but an outpouring of fervent feeling, springing from truth dwelling in the heart. "There prevails in our days," it has been well said; "a very general tendency to regard religion as consisting essentially—I might say wholly—in religious sentiment, in those lofty and vague aspirations which are termed the poetry of the soul, beyond and above the realities of life.

. . . . . Unquestionably the religious sentiment, the intimate and personal relation of the soul with the Divine order of things, is essential and necessary to religion ; but religion is more than this—much more. Man is not a mere sensitive and poetic being, aspiring to rise above the present and material world by love and imagination : he not only feels, but he thinks ; he requires to know and believe as well as love ; it is not enough that his soul should be capable of emotion and aspiration ; he requires that it should be fixed, and rests upon convictions in harmony with his emotions. This it is that man seeks in religion ; he requires something more than a pure and holy rapture ; he requires enlightenment as well as sympathy." Now, this "something more," of which Guizot speaks, is found in the religious experience of these verses. But—

3. The "pure and noble rapture" that circulates, as a profound Christian experience, through this apostolic hymn, is quite as remarkable as the foundation of truth and conviction on which it rests. Every truth here takes the form of a high feeling, and every feeling is just a truth living in the heart. If we are to regard this utterance of Peter as indicating the tone of primitive Christianity, what an exalted idea does it give us of the reason, as well as emotion, that entered into the life of the first Christians ! We have here the doctrines of Divine sovereignty—of a Divine birth—of the resurrection of Christ—of an inheritance reserved in heaven for the saints—of the saints being kept for that inheritance by the power of the Almighty—of the certainty of its being revealed at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The embracing and grasping of these doctrines—with whatever simplicity this might be done—implied an elevated exercise of reason, and could not but be fruitful in profound thought. When, however, these doctrines were not only imbibed by the intellect, so as to become food for thoughtful speculation, but became part of the very soul, and were transformed into a kind of spiritual life-blood, renovating those who embraced them, and making them new creatures, translating them from

darkness to light, and changing them from being children of the wicked one into the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty,—when these doctrines were thus appropriated by the soul, they fashioned into a form of life than which we can conceive nothing higher.

The Christian is the highest style of man. And the highest style of the Christian is that in which he is intelligently believing, with an appropriating faith, the sublimest truths of the Gospel, and at the same time so surrendering himself to the sanctifying influences of these truths, that they become at once sources of devout emotion and springs of holy conduct, filling the soul with ennobling thanksgiving, and making even our human life divine.

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“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”—1 PETER i. 6-9.

WE, who are successors of the apostles, as inheritors of their faith, and partakers of their life, are also blessed with the same fellowship that they enjoyed. It is true we do not see him whose communion we are cultivating, and in whose fellowship we have God living within us. In our daily walk with the Lord we do not now see him; nor have we ever seen him. We have never had any sight of Jesus according to the flesh; so that though he were in these days appearing on earth in the form that he assumed when he dwelt here before, we have no such knowledge of his human features as would enable us to verify him.

In this respect we differ from those who, in regard to the humanity of the Lord, saw him with their eyes, and heard him with their ears, and handled him with their hands. It was only, however, during a part of their life,



as the followers of Jesus, that the apostles walked, in this sense, by sight as well as by faith. The greater proportion even of *their* life was spent in the fellowship of an unseen Saviour, thereby giving them sympathy with those who, in all coming ages, were to live and die without seeing him in whom, nevertheless, they had their standing as justified persons before God—their highest life, and their holiest and most exalted hopes.

Nor is this believing in an unseen instead of a visible Saviour a lower, but rather a higher form of spiritual life. Thomas was not commended for saying, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe," even though, after being permitted to do so, he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" For Jesus said unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: *blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*"

Peter evidently, in these verses, does not make any spiritual interest or hope, in himself or others, to hinge upon having seen the Lord. On the contrary, everything is made to turn upon union to him, "Whom having not seen, ye love; *in whom*, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice."

"In whom" expresses that which is most fundamental about a Christian. Apart from the union to the Lord which this phrase denotes, there is no Christian vitality, no life that is distinctively Christian, no enjoyment of Christian privilege. On the contrary, when we realise in ourselves what this phrase means, we feel joined to the Lord, though He be in heaven and we on the earth; we have in Him a husband and a yokefellow, so that henceforth we do not feel ourselves to exist in the world solitary and alone, but in the company of One who shares our burdens, and sympathises with us in our sorrows, and counsels us in our difficulties, and befriends us in our time of need.

This is what divines call the mystical union between Christ and his Church, which is not only an orthodox

theological doctrine, but a spiritual fact, on which, in the case of every individual Christian, our highest life, and vigour, and fruitfulness depend, as much as the fruitfulness of a branch depends on its remaining in the tree that supplies it with vital sap.

This union, however, and the life of communion that comes out of it, though unseen, are not unreal or inoperative. The very reverse. There is nothing so real, nothing so vitalising to the whole mind as cultivated communion with the unseen Redeemer. He is a power within us, exercising a most beneficent and ennobling influence in every faculty and feeling.

1. Having found Jesus, and keeping hold of Him, we have the present salvation of our souls. In Him we receive the forgiveness of our sins, through the sprinkling of His blood, and the justification of our persons through the imputation to us of His righteousness. From Him, too, we receive the Holy Spirit to sanctify us wholly, and enable us to live to God.

2. This life is a life of love as well as of faith. Not only is there the receiving of saving blessings from Jesus, but the going out of gratitude and affection towards Him, leading the saved soul to be often saying or singing, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in all the earth whom I desire besides thee"—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever"—"We love him because he first loved us."

3. But this life on the wings of faith and love rises up to the region of joy. The person who is one with the Lord rejoices in Him as his present refuge and strength—rejoices also in His promised appearance and kingdom. In the prospect of the inheritance, now reserved in heaven, being revealed in the last time, Peter represents the Christians of his day as "greatly rejoicing"—"rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Yet this was not an enthusiastic joy—a joy that made the possessor of it so jubilant and ecstatic, that he soared

far above any sympathy with the sorrows, or participation in the troubles of this lower sphere. The joy of the Christian is a joy that may be blended with "heaviness." This joy does not exalt him to a region beyond the touch of temptations, but rather humbly reconciles him to them. It does not make him insensible to any of the sufferings of the present, as if he were physically superior to these. On the contrary, while tenderly alive to the sorrows and manifold afflictions of the present life, the Christian, without ceasing to cherish his gospel joy, sees that "for a season" there is "a need be" for these afflictions. He regards them as necessary discipline, administered by the hand of his heavenly Father, and as designed to purge the "dross and tin" from those heavenly graces that are more precious than gold, that these golden graces, being thus tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Tried but hopeful Christians, then, go on singing in the house of their pilgrimage, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

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"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."—1 PETER i. 13-16.

THE revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven is the hope which, under the tuition of the Christian Scriptures, we are ever led to cherish. From the day when He was "taken up" till now, this hope has never ceased to animate Christian bosoms; and it is animating them still. Our present attitude as believers is that of looking for the appearing and kingdom of the Lord: not merely looking backward to what He has done, or upward to *what He is now doing* as our Intercessor in the heavenly

places, but forward to what He has promised to do when He comes in His glory. "Waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus," is our present and proper posture. Not till this event takes place will the issues of our faith be made fully manifest; for it is this event that is to terminate the economy of time, and introduce the economy of eternity, till which the "salvation that we have in Christ with eternal glory" will be comparatively hidden. It has evidently been God's plan in the training of His people, under every dispensation, to keep them in the attitude of expectation. The first coming of Christ was for ages the Hope of the Church; and no sooner was this hope fulfilled than it gave rise to another, even the hope of a second coming, when the designs of the first were to have their consummation.

It is true that the present possession of Christ gives us a present salvation. We have even now the forgiveness of our sins, the justification of our persons, the acceptance of our services, the Holy Ghost dwelling in us as the earnest of our future inheritance. But what we have at present is not separate and detached from what is yet to come; it is rather indissolubly linked with the future, insomuch that we cannot be trusting in Christ now without looking for His coming to give us what we have been trusting in Him for. It is impossible to be glorying in Christ's cross without at the same time glorying in His crown—impossible to be partakers of His sufferings without also feeling ourselves to be partakers of the glory to be revealed. And yet we often fail in calling into vigorous exercise faith viewed as "the substance of things hoped for." The fact that our Saviour is to come, bringing to us salvation and glory, is not so often before our minds as the fact that He has come, and that He has died for our sins. And even when it is before our minds, there is more of dimness and uncertainty than we attach to what is past or present in the work of Christ.

The apostle Peter warns us against this. He exhorts us who have become the children of God, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance, not to become slothful, not to allow

any reckless or cheerless state of mind to creep over us, as if our hope were a vague conjecture, rather than one for which we had a solid reason ; but "to gird up the loins of our mind, to be sober, and *hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" As much as to say, There is not a doubt that Jesus who died for our sins, and who is now at the right hand of God, will by and by come. We, apostles, have not followed cunningly-devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of the Lord. We were eye-witnesses of His ascension, and with our own ears we heard the angels saying, "This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." There is not a doubt that our blessed Lord will come, and bring to us all the grace for which He has been causing us to hope. He will come to raise our bodies from the dead—to fashion them like to His own glorious body—to receive us into His kingdom—to admit us into the place in His Father's house which He has been preparing for us. Let not our hands, then, hang down. Let not our knees become feeble. Let us not take up with present worldly pleasures, "the lust of the eye, or the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life." Let us not throw off all salutary restraint, or cease, under the "Captain of our salvation," to fight against the devil and all his works. Let not the helmet that once enabled us boldly to face our enemies be taken from our heads. Let not the star of hope that once animated us now become dim, or disappear from our view. Let us rather stir up that faith which is "the substance of things hoped for ;" and, with the grasp of a renewed assurance, lay hold of the things that are to be brought unto us, when He in whom we now live shall be revealed from heaven. This hope we have, as the Scripture on which we are now meditating teaches, not as God's creatures, *but as His children in Christ Jesus.* And, verily, if God be now our Father, and we His children, our plain duty is to render to Him obedience—*filial* obedience,—not to be living as we did in our ignor-

ance, when we knew not God, when we were walking in spiritual blindness, before the Sun of righteousness had arisen upon us, bringing us out of darkness, and making us to see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of His Son; "not fashioning ourselves according to the former lust in our ignorance," but cultivating the character exhibited by our heavenly Father, before whom we walk; aiming at the restoration of His image in our souls; contented with nothing less than being holy, even as He is holy; than being perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect.

It is thus that the hope of the revelation of Jesus Christ purifies us, even as He is pure. There is no system, religious or ethical, more decisively practical than the Gospel. Every one of its doctrines has a palpable bearing upon our every-day conduct; and none more so than the doctrine which teaches that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come in that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

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"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."—1 PETER i. 17.

THE life that we have by Jesus Christ is one in which we have the spirit of adoption, whereby we can call God our Father. But in living as God's children we not only call Him Father, we call *on* Him as our Father. We are brought to live as it were in His house, are members of His family, and from time to time have occasion to be speaking to Him, and communicating with Him about some matter that concerns us as His children. *Calling on the Father* is a very real as well as pleasing feature of

the life that we live, when, from being outcasts, we become inmates of the family of our Father in heaven.

It is no way inconsistent with the Fatherhood of God that He should be at the same time the Judge of His children, and, as such, that He should take account of what they do, with a view to His forming an *impartial* judgment concerning them. No doubt it is a precious truth that "like as a father pitieth his children, the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, that He knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust;" but this pity is not partiality—it is not of the nature of favouritism; nor does it blind Him to the eternal distinctions of good and evil, of right and wrong, when these are brought to bear on the members of His own household, as if when we became the children of God we might presume upon a paternal pity being exercised towards us, that would make Him wink at our follies or cover our delinquencies. Our Father does not cease to be our Judge; nor does He judge our deportment by any false standard, or according to any capricious rule—by anything else, indeed, than His own law, which is holy, and just, and good.

It is true that the "judging" of which the apostle Peter speaks is not so much forensic as domestic; it is not with a view to the judicial condemnation or the judicial acquittal, on the part of God, of His children, as if the matter to be determined was, whether they had righteousness enough to entitle them, on legal grounds, to be admitted into heaven. In a strictly judicial sense, the only righteousness that can furnish a title to heaven is the righteousness of God's own providing—the Surety-righteousness wrought out by His own Son, which is now revealed for our acceptance in the word of the truth of the Gospel. And those who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and are "calling on the Father," are already in possession of this righteousness, and therefore in a state of justification. But though justified, and "accepted in God's sight for the sake of the righteousness of Christ imputed to them," and, moreover, adopted into the number of His family, having "a right to all the

privileges of the sons of God," this does not make their Father indifferent to their conduct; this does not make Him regardless whether they obey or disobey Him, whether their doings be good or evil, worthy or unworthy of the relation in which they stand to Him, and of the "undefiled inheritance" into the hope of which they have been begotten. Nor does it permit Him to do anything else than form a righteous and impartial estimate of the work wrought by His children, He on whom we call is "doubtless" our Father, but the Father on whom all the children call, *without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work.*

The design of God in subjecting all His children to an impartial judgment is no doubt manifold. (1.) For one thing, He thereby makes the question of our being His children to be solved by our works. Do I say that I am a child of God? Do I with the mouth call God Father? This is well, for with the mouth we are to make confession both of the name of God and of our relation to Him. But the making of this profession does not decide its truth. It is by our works that our profession is to be verified and determined, not only to ourselves and to others, but even in the sight of God. By the life as well as by the lip we are to manifest that we are calling on God as His children. The trees of righteousness are to be judged, not merely by scrutinising into the soundness of their roots, but by deciding on the nature of their fruits. (2.) Then, again, the knowledge that our Father in heaven is daily judging us according to our works, acts as salutary discipline; and no doubt He designed that this should be the case. Is the eye of the Father on whom I call—whose approving look I value more than the approbation of the wisest and best in the universe—ever upon me? Is He noticing my every act, marking my every step, hearing my every word, detecting my every motive? And is He every day forming a true and impartial judgment of everything I feel, and say, and do? How holily, then, should I live! How constantly should I be studying to approve myself to God! It is by discip-



line of this exalted character that God's children are trained to holy living, and stimulated to energetic and useful working. This is the education that peculiarises those who "call on the Father"—an education in which, while raised above legal bondage and slavish restraint, they are stirred up to seek in all their ways the approval of the High and Holy One, who, while loving them with an unspeakable love, can never take pleasure in anything in them that is wrong, but can only love those things that are good, upright, honourable, and useful. (3.) It is only by the Father, "without respect of persons, judging according to every man's work," that He can determine the measure of reward to be bestowed on His children. Though God's children are justified by faith, they are judged by works, and their eternal rewards are to be proportioned to the works which their faith has produced. What an encouragement to well-doing does this prospect hold out! "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

But Peter is here speaking to "strangers and pilgrims," and therefore the lesson he specially deduces is, that those who "call on the Father" should "pass the time of their sojourning in *fear*"—that is, in reverence for their Father in heaven, and cherishing a holy fear of provoking His displeasure. If their Father had in Him nothing but tenderness—nothing but love of that soft kind that disinclined Him to put any difference between the obedient and the disobedient, and if they had reason to look upon themselves as His favourites, in such a sense as warranted them to expect that He would judge their works in a spirit of partiality, rather than according to truth, then they might perhaps presume upon their Father, and deport themselves towards Him lightly, thoughtlessly, and with a disrespectful bearing. But if the Father on whom they called would judge every man's work without respecting the person of any, then it became them to *reverence* one who was as just as He was kind, and who

combined the rectitude of the judge with the tenderness of the parent.

If, as sojourners in the wilderness, they were to feel that they had a Father in heaven whose paternal eye was ever over them, and that, therefore, they might journey towards their heavenly inheritance with joyful and confiding step, and if they were at the same time to feel that this Father was taking daily account of their doings, and that "He would bring every work of theirs into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it was good or whether it was evil,"—then it became them to "pass the time of their sojourning in fear"—in the fear of doing wrong, in the fear of coming short of duly honouring their Father, in the fear of forfeiting the approval of Him "who is the Rewarder" of them who diligently seek and faithfully serve Him. "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

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"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."—1 PETER i. 18-21.

THE Lord Jesus Christ is our Redeemer. We who believe on Him are a redeemed people. We are a company of captives who have been rescued out of the hand of the enemy, and are now walking in freedom under Jesus our Deliverer and Head. Redemption, rather than creation, is the ground we stand upon as Christians. Not that by redemption our relations to God as His creatures are abrogated or ignored. On the contrary, they were recognised and respected, and held to be "holy and just and good." The design, indeed, of the

redeeming work of Christ is just to place us in a position for fulfilling these relations, and realising the beneficent ends originally contemplated by them. Sin had perverted and marred these. It had introduced among them all confusion and disorder by separating between God and those whom He made for Himself, and thus breaking up that Divine fellowship between the Creator and the creature on which they were all founded. Sin had made man a rebel—degraded him even to a slave. Nor was it in his power to break his chains and set himself free. If he was ever to be emancipated, this must be brought about by some mightier arm than his own. That mightier arm has been stretched forth, and redemption for man has been achieved. “Deliver from going down to the pit,” said this mighty One, speaking in righteousness, “*I have found out a ransom.*”

The ransom paid by Jesus for our redemption was not such a ransom as has often been paid for the liberation of captives and slaves. It was not so many hundreds, or thousands, or even millions of pounds. Twenty millions of pounds sterling were paid some years ago by the British people for the emancipation of the slaves of her West India Colonies; but the price of *our* redemption was something far beyond this. “*We were not redeemed with such corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*” It was not money, but *life* that was laid down for our deliverance; it was not gold, but “*blood.*” Nor was it the blood of bulls and goats, but the precious blood of God’s own Son. No higher price could be paid. The multitudes of the heavenly host, with the addition of the entire human family, though combined together, and presented as a united offering on the altar of God, would not have been so costly as the one Lamb of God, who in the end of the world put away sin by the sacrifice of *Himself*.

Well, do we “know” all this? Have I, as a believer in Jesus, such a “knowledge” of what He has done for my redemption, that my heart is touched towards Him

with a personal feeling of love, and made to go out to Him as my Redeemer, saying, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? What are the ways in which I can serve Thee? How shall I expend that fire of fervent gratitude that has been kindled towards Thee in my bosom, and that is kept burning there by the thought of Thy self-sacrificing love?

Alas! how sadly we are awaiting in this personal affectionate, ardent gratitude towards Jesus, our Lord and Saviour?

It is so long since He died: we have to go back so many hundreds of years in the world's history ere we reach the hour when the event of the crucifixion took place, that it is apt from its very distance to appear dim and somewhat dubious before us; and we can hardly believe that at a such remote period the Sufferer on Calvary, when "He bowed his head and gave up the ghost," was thinking on *us*, that He was loving *us*, and that He really died for *us*.

But to counteract this withering suspicion, so fatal to the personal love towards Jesus as our Redeemer we should ever be cherishing, it would seem enough to keep in mind *who* it was who then suffered. It was God manifest in the flesh—God with us. It was One who is the "same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." We are to remember also that the event of the crucifixion was one that had taken place in the purpose of God before time began its course; it had been foretold and foreshadowed ages before it happened; and when it did happen, it was "according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" it was "foreordained before the foundation of the world."

And as what was "manifested in the last days," or in the fulness of time when the precious blood of the Lamb of God was shed, was an antecedent and eternal purpose of love and mercy towards the human family, so the record of what was then manifested was designed to be to the eye of faith a manifestation of the same Divine kindness and pity to the world's end; insomuch that

every one now living, or any who may live in future ages, drawing near to Jesus, and placing himself under the shadow of His cross, may believe himself, *just as certainly as he is drawing near*, to have been the object of the Saviour's love, when on that cross He said, "It is finished," and to have been *then* redeemed with His most precious blood.

There is, in one sense, no past or present or future about the redeeming work of Calvary. As regards, at any rate, its efficacy, it was the same in the days of the patriarchs and prophets as in the days of the apostles; and it is the same now as it was then, and will continue to be so for evermore. Remoteness from the time when Christ died does not diminish the truth or certainty of any believer's redemption by that death. Now—at this moment—any sinner believing on Jesus is as nigh to Him, and as truly one of those redeemed by His cross, as was the penitent thief who was crucified along with Him.

"Forasmuch then as we know" that we were redeemed by Jesus when He loved us and gave Himself for us, it concerns us to ascertain what elements enter into the redemption that He then obtained for us.

1. There is redemption from the "curse"—from the curse, that is, of the holy law of God that we have all broken, and under which accordingly we universally lie. From the general sentence of death that hangs over our heads, as those who are "guilty" and have been "condemned already," from this condemnatory sentence Jesus has redeemed us by bearing it in our stead (Gal. iii. 13).

2. We are redeemed from our "vain conversation"—from the frivolous, unsatisfactory, unfruitful manner in which we lived when we "knew not God;" and having been so redeemed by the Lord who bought us, our life is now pervaded with a purpose, springing from "faith and hope in God," and is shaped so as to become good and profitable to men. The life we now follow is not so much a paltry, unspiritual, godless, hereditary sort of life, into which we have insensibly glided "by tradition from our fathers," as the fresh, intelligent, earnest, God-fearing life

of those who are diligently seeking to buy back the time lost by them, when the whole of life was "vanity and vexation of spirit."

3. Our Redeemer gave Himself for us, that "He might redeem us from all iniquity" (Titus ii. 14).

The process going on just now in the souls of the redeemed is a sanctifying process; their begun redemption continues to be wrought out through the cultivation of fellowship with their living Redeemer, from whom they receive the spirit of holiness; and this redeeming work will be carried on, not only till the soul be purged from all evil, but till the body itself be redeemed from the grave, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Lord (Rom. viii. 23).

4. By the precious blood of our Saviour Jesus we are "redeemed to God" (Rev. v. 9). We are delivered "from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts xxvi. 18). By our redemption we are made "kings and priests unto God, even the Father." The freedom bestowed upon us by our Redeemer is a freedom in the highest and most exalted spheres to serve God. This, indeed, is the only true freedom. So long as we are the servants of the devil, the world, or the flesh—so long as we merely serve others, or even ourselves, we are never anything but slaves. Now and again, we may fancy ourselves free; but it is fancy only, and not fact; a life away from God is a life in which we are continually overcome by some form of evil; and "of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage." Only in the service of God, and under the regulation of His law, is anything deserving the name of redemption-life to be found.

Redeemed, then, to God, and to a life of faith and hope in Him, by a price so costly as the blood of His own Son, let my habitual feeling be, that I am not my own, but His; that I belong to the Lord who bought me; and that it is at once my duty, dignity, blessedness, through fellowship with my redeeming Head in glory, to consecrate my redeemed life to the service and glory of Him whose I am, and in whom I am to find the end of my being.

## NATIONAL RELIGION.\*

“O let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.”—PSALM lxvii. 4.

THE subject on which I wish at present to throw out a few Biblical thoughts is National Religion. I do not propose an elaborate discussion of a subject so complex and far reaching, and, in many of its bearings, so difficult; but neither do I wish to handle such a theme superficially or without making an effort to grasp some at least of the great principles which it involves. It can hardly be necessary to say that the subject now announced is, in the strictest sense, a Bible subject. Not only is it to be found in the Bible in a few scattered passages, but it pervades the whole from Genesis to Revelation. Nations and the duties of nations towards God, occupy a large space in the Sacred Volume. Even so far back as the period when the God of glory called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, it was with the ultimate view of “all the nations of the earth” being blessed in him and in his seed. The Seed of Abraham was to “inherit all nations:—to be the “Desire of all nations.” “Men were to be blessed in Him, and all the nations were to call Him blessed.” “The gathering of the people,” it was anciently predicted, was to be “unto Him.” In the covenant of royalty made with David, it was promised that the Messiah should be of his seed, according to the flesh, and should sit on his throne for ever; and subsequent prophets foretold that this royal seed of David would reign for ever, not only over the house of Jacob, but over the Gentile nations; and that in His name the Gentiles would trust. Accordingly, when the time came for the Son of David to

\* A Sermon preached at the opening of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Glasgow, May 4, 1868, by Rev. John M'Dermid, Glasgow.

sit down on His throne, and receive "all power in heaven and in earth," He commissioned His apostles to go forth into all the world, and "disciple all nations." The comprehensive prophecies of Daniel point to, and terminate in, a period when "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." And in the apocalyptic visions of John, we have a time revealed when "there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." And what is this Psalm, in which our text lies, but a song celebrating in simple but sublime strains the triumph of national religion, under the reign of the "Governor among the nations;" and, as a consequence of this, the triumph of national justice and universal prosperity! "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth."

All that I propose to myself at present is, first, to unfold a little the nature of national religion, and then to make one or two reflections suggested by the aspect of the subject I mean to exhibit.

#### I.—WHAT IS NATIONAL RELIGION?

The term Religion, I apprehend, has no meaning when applied to a nation materially different from what it has when applied to an individual. Religion is the binding of the soul to God. It expresses the idea of godliness. A religious man is a man who knows, and fears, and loves, and serves God. He has been restored to the life of God through faith in Him who is the Way to the Father; and he now "lives godly in Christ Jesus." A religious man not only believes God, and trusts in Him for the fulfilment of the promises of His word, but surrenders himself to the Divine government. He



rejoices in the liberty of subjection to the Divine will. He cherishes loyalty to the Eternal Throne. He accepts of the law of righteousness out of the hand of his Saviour-Prince as the rule of his life : and his continual question is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Well, these, and such as these, are just the exercises that enter into national as well as personal religion. A nation is religious just in proportion as, through the mediation of the man Christ Jesus, it knows, and loves, and serves, and glorifies God.

But here one or two explanatory remarks will be necessary.

1. National religion is not precisely the same thing with the aggregate of the personal religion that may happen to exist in a nation. With the view of being on this point distinctly understood, we may warrantably suppose such a thing (alas, it must as yet be only a supposition) as a nation consisting mainly of godly persons—of a people, that is, all or nearly all, personally pious. This, doubtless, would be something very high and glorious ; it would be a scene that would beautify the earth, and make heaven glad ; yet, glorious as it would be, it would be nothing beyond what the Bible teaches us to labour and hope for. We pray for it, indeed, every time we devoutly say "Thy kingdom come ; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." But, even though this exalting supposition were a present reality, it would not quite rise up to the idea that, in my mind at any rate, is suggested by the phrase National Religion. If the nation, in its own national acts, did not acknowledge God,—if it did not at stated seasons pray to Him, and take lessons from His Word,—if it did not recognise His day, His providence, His supreme government,—if it did not kiss His Son, bowing before him as King of kings and Lord of lords,—if, in a word, it did not, both by profession and practice, seek to be ruled by the principles of His eternal law, it would not be entitled to be distinctively, and in the completest sense, spoken of as a religious nation. It would be, on this supposition, a

nation of religious persons, but not a nation, by its own national constitution and acts, acknowledging God and His Son, and professing subjection to the rule of heaven. But surely this element of corporate obligation and subjection to God and Christ must enter as one ingredient into the complex idea of national religion. To exclude this ingredient seems to us to render the idea altogether defective; yea, to mar its symmetry and to deface its beauty. To do so would be to despoil national religion of its monarchical crown; for it is only when this crowning element is admitted that we can figure to ourselves a nation, as distinguished from the individuals who compose it, rendering homage to God—the homage, I mean, of prayer and praise, of religious worship and subjection. Into personal religion, as all allow, there enters the indispensable element of worship; and this element of worship appears to enter as essentially into the idea of family and national religion, as it does into that which is personal. There are few who would regard a family as entitled to be called a religious family—even though every member of it were pious—if within the family circle the voice of prayer and the melody of praise were not heard, if the Scriptures were not read as the supreme authority in the house, and if God were not acknowledged in the mercies and afflictions common to the household. A religious family is a family in which God is not only the God of each member, singly and apart, but the God of the house collectively. For every house, whatever may be the number of members that compose it, is a unity; nor is this unity a human but a divine idea. In every such house, then, religion will rear its altar, where family sacrifices of prayer and praise will be offered, where religious instruction will be given, and where even the common family table will be graced by a devout acknowledgement of God in the food with which His providence covers it. And so a Christian nation—which is a unity quite as much as a family, and equally dependent on God, and responsible to Him—will, at fitting times, engage in national worship, and seek gener-

ally to deport itself as a "kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."

2. But, secondly, national religion, while it is something additional to the aggregate personal religion of a nation, is not, on that account, mere religious officialism, at least in any offensive sense of the term officialism. There is a very important sense in which I would have no objection, but the very reverse, to speak of official religion. Every man clothed with office, civil as well as ecclesiastical, is bound to recognise God in his official character : and, not only as an individual, but as an official person, to do what he does in the sight of the Lord, for the Divine glory as well as the public good. There is no collision between the personal and official in such a case. The latter may not be, in the strictest sense, a development of the former ; yet they mingle and blend together in the most beautiful harmony. The personal is the basis of the official ; and the various doings of the public life of a man acting in some official capacity, will be fraught with a special sacredness, and animated with a power that will be felt rather than seen, when they are vitalised and consecrated by habitual communion with the Eternal King.

We ought to be on our guard against vilifying official religion as if it were necessarily a sham, and in essential antagonism to what is personal. A Christian, who, as to his office, is a *minister*, is not the less a Christian, when, as a minister, he comes to the throne of the Heavenly grace, and prays to be enabled to live not only as a "man in Christ," but as an office-bearer in His house. He does not ignore his personality when he magnifies his office, by entering into the presence of the Great High Priest clothed, so to speak, in his official robes, to put him in mind of the gifts and graces required for the right discharge of his official duty. A *parent*, who is a Christian, does not pass from a spiritual to a mechanical exercise when he passes from praying for himself to praying for the members of his household. Nor is the Sovereign of a State, or the occupant of any subordinate

office in such a State, to be regarded as playing the hypocrite, or merely performing a part on the stage on which he is called to move and act, when he prays at once for himself and the nation over which he rules ; or for the Divine blessing to rest on the discharge of the duties which, by his office, he is called on to fulfil.

It must be admitted, however, that there is a certain type of official religion on which it is impossible to look with Christian complacency. Thus religious forms may be appointed to be observed in certain departments of the State, while no religious qualifications are required on the part of those who administer those departments. In virtue of certain statutes prayers may be appointed to be said in, for example, our halls of legislature, or at the opening of our courts of justice, while there is no provision whatever for our legislators or judges being men who "fear God and keep His commandments." The presence of a clergyman is generally thought to be necessary for the reading or saying of such prayers—work of this kind being regarded as his peculiar business. Sometimes, accordingly, one may see, on occasions of this kind, the most decorous and devout behaviour outwardly displayed by State officials, when at the same time they are well known to be dishonouring religion by their life and conduct, and when, notwithstanding that the incongruity is seen, it cannot be put a stop to by any legal measures. Now, it would plainly be a misnomer to call this a token of national religion ; it is more likely to suggest the thought of national hypocrisy. There is the semblance of religion in such forms ; but when they are of the kind I am supposing, they are the semblance only : there is no real religion in them, personal or official. Nor would the greatest and most widely diffused multiplication of such religious forms deserve to receive the honourable designation of National Religion.

It will have been observed that there is one specially noticeable feature about this type of things—the feature, namely, that all the religion of the State is done and performed *through the Church*. The Church is selected, and

made use of as the religious substitute of the nation. The Nation, instead of discharging its own religious duties on its own responsibility, employs the mediation or instrumentality of the Church. The sacerdotal idea appears to be at the bottom of this whole style of things. The State takes the Church into its favour and patronage, and establishes and endows it as a national institute ; it then appoints all the public worship that may require to be offered throughout the nation to be conducted by clergymen of this established Church. The education of the country is also put into their hands ; in fact, everything the Nation does bearing upon religion is done, according to this form of national life, by the Church. The Nation is understood to be secular, and the Church religious ; and the way in which the Nation is supposed to become a religious nation is by devolving all the religious duties it owes to God or the people on the care of the Church, as the only body competent to attend to such spiritual matters. In proportion as this is done or not done, the State is held by many to be godly or ungodly, atheistic or profane, infidel or religious.

Now, I am not going to pour forth any unmeasured invective against this mode of nationalising the Christian religion. It is the form of religious life in which Europe has been cradled and nurtured, and it has done much in producing the civilisation that we see around us. The Church, when it was first set up among the Gentiles, was every way the superior of the old Pagan States, not only in regard to religion, but in regard to morality, education, and general enlightenment ; and it was perhaps good for the development of the world that the Church got these sources of influence to such an extent under its control. But this state of things seems past, or nearly so, especially in the Protestant and more enlightened countries ; and I am persuaded that the change, instead of being to the discredit of the Church, is really to its honour, and would be acquiesced in, if the Church would but look at what is falling out with an intelligent eye. For what is, or ought to be, the object of the Church as regards the

State but to make it religious—that is to say, to train the Nation, through its own functionaries, *to do its own work religiously*; just as it is the object of the Church to make individuals and families religious by training them respectively to do their own work, and to fulfil their own duties on religious principles and in a religious spirit? There may be a state of matters which requires the Church to charge itself directly with the religious education of families. This will be the case in every country where the Christian Church has been newly set up. But surely the perpetuation of this state of things is not desirable. If the Church has anything of a right spirit, its aim will be, as speedily as possible, so to instruct heads of families that the youth belonging to them may be taught by the parents themselves. And if heads of households, after having been so instructed, should begin to assert a position somewhat independent of Church rulers, and say—We will ourselves take charge of the teaching of our children; we will relieve the Church from taking the guidance of this matter in future; we now see ourselves to be responsible for the education of our children, and we will educate them under our own responsibility to God;—the Church ought not to regard this as a discomfiture, or interpret it as of the nature of rebellion against ecclesiastical authority. The spirit prompting it may be really a religious spirit, and if so, the change demanded would be the Church's loftiest triumph.

It is surely better that the head of a house be a man who can creditably and with priestly dignity preside over the instruction and worship of his own family, than that he should be dependent on the Church for every religious service performed under his roof. I believe the late Mr. Wilberforce—the great Christian statesman—reckoned it his duty to take the charge of his domestic worship, by invariably conducting a part of it himself, even when clergymen were present, in order that he might accustom himself to feel, and make others understand what was his and their duty. Well, I would like to see a responsibility of this kind felt by the authorities of the State as well as

by domestic authorities. I would like to see Sovereigns of such a spirit and type of character, as that on great State occasions they could pour forth a prayer, if not as sublime in its sentiments, at least as sincere in its devotion, as that of Solomon. I would like prayers, on public occasions, to be offered by civilians as well as clergymen. A religious judge, when opening one of our courts, himself praying for the wisdom and guidance he felt he needed, rather than getting a city minister to do this service, would be to me a very pleasing spectacle. I would like to see our civil as well as ecclesiastical meetings opened with prayer by those presiding over them. This, as it appears to me, would be the realisation of the Scriptural idea of national religion much more than the form of things which obtains, where the nation, having established a Church, does all its religious duties through the ecclesiastical functionaries of that establishment.

The effect, I conceive, of the style of national life that puts all religious duties into the hands of Churchmen, as if those duties could be legitimately performed only by them, is to favour and foster the exceedingly mischievous delusion, that the State is always to continue secular and unspiritual, and that it is only in the Church we are to expect religion. This is a mean, ignoble, and unscriptural idea of the State. In its nature and origin, the State, or, in other words, civil government, is the ordinance of God, for His glory, and the good of man; and although, like everything else, it has been involved in all the sad disorders and perplexities brought upon our race by that "alienation of all things from God," which has resulted from the apostacy, yet this alienation is not to be perpetual. The restoration of civil government to its primary and original purposes, consequent upon the reconciliation and loyal subjection of the nations to the Most High, through the mediation of his Son, belongs to our Christian destiny. This is the great and gladdening prospect which awaits the world. And the redeeming and reconciling agency for bringing all this to pass is the Church—the Church dispensing the grace, imparting the knowledge,

teaching the principles, inculcating the commandments, and wielding the power of her Head and King. On it has been devolved the high and magnificent purpose of bringing back the world to the Supreme King and the Supreme Law, not in its isolated individuals only, but in its nations as well—making nations to take their lofty yet legitimate place in the great empire of Jehovah. And surely a nation cannot occupy its rightful place in the vast empire of the Eternal without its officials—themselves, and not by ecclesiastical deputies,—owning prayerfully the Supreme King, doing homage to His Son, accounting it their honour as well as duty, consciously to work out His designs in the appointment of national society; and so, in this extensive department of affairs, to make “His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

II.—The following are some GENERAL REFLECTIONS which I now beg leave to submit, as having been suggested by our present inquiry into the Nature of National Religion.

1. National Religion is not to be confounded with Civil Establishments of religion.

If, brethren, the line of thought I have been just pursuing be defensible and sound, the question of national religion is a very much deeper, broader, and more vital one than the vexed question of the relation between Church and State. These two questions have, indeed, often been treated as if identical—as if the one was essentially involved in the other; and any attempt to separate them, and speak of the latter as altogether subordinate to the former, has been stigmatized as impious, and as subversive of the great doctrine of national religion. Nor has this identification of two questions that appear to us quite separate and distinct, been confined to a few inaccurate thinkers or obscure writers. On the contrary, one of the most eloquent and prominent of our present politicians evidently regards the two questions as in reality one. This appears from the following utterances recently given forth from his high place in the British



Parliament:—"What do we mean," asks Mr. Disraeli, "by the union between Church and State? It is of importance at a crisis like the present to understand this. I understand by that union, government not merely political. I understand, that with such a union the government is to be not merely an affair of force, but that it is to recognise its responsibility to a Divine power. We have discarded the divine right of kings, and properly; discarded it because the divine right of kings led only to the abuse of supernatural powers by the individual. But wise and enlightened men will never discard the Divine right of government. If government is not Divine it is nothing; it is a mere machine of the police office, of the tax-gatherer, and of the guard-room. Any man who has had any experience knows this, that every year government becomes more difficult; and what facilitates government is its connection with the religious principle. It is not the guard-room, it is not the police office, it is not the tax gatherer that can govern a nation. You must educate the people, reform the criminal, relieve the wants of suffering society. These are the duties of a government, and how can it fulfil such offices unless in connection with religion? It is the principle of religion that makes a government sensible and conscious that it has to perform those duties; and having to perform such duties, it requires the fitting agency with which to perform them. Well," he continues, "I am totally at a loss to see how you can connect government with religion except by means of establishments. I want to know how you can connect government with religion, except by means of a Church establishment." And yet again, he says, "If you are going to destroy the establishment of the Church in Ireland, without setting up any other Church, Popish or Presbyterian, you must have a government in Ireland not connected with any religious principle."

Now, with many, I may say with most, of these sentiments I cordially concur. I heartily agree with the notion that government should "recognise its responsibility to a Divine power," and that the "the principle of religion"

should pervade national government. But what I hesitate to accept, nay, I must go further and say, what I am constrained boldly to deny, is that this pervading principle of national religion is bound up with a national Church, civilly established—so bound up and intertwined with it, that it is only in the existence of such a Church that we can have national religion visibly embodied; whereas the downfall and disappearance of such a Church, after having had an existence, would be tantamount to the destruction of national religion.

This is not the place for giving any opinion, one way or other, regarding the Irish Church, the great politico-ecclesiastical question of the day; at least, this is not the place for discussing questions affecting the justice or expediency of such an institution from the points of view from which these questions required to be looked at by political men. But this does seem to me both the place and the time for analysing those questions from which we are to evolve the principle—the fundamental and distinctive principle—of national religion. And to me it appears essential, if we would get at this principle, to search for it in its simplest and most elementary form, disentangling it from its complications, and detaching it from all collateral questions; especially from the question as to what the State should do, or in certain circumstances may warrantably do, in the way of civilly establishing and endowing the Church as a corporate society—a society that, claiming for its Founder and Ruler “the Man of God’s right hand,” existed for centuries, not only without State countenance and support, but in the face of imperial frowns and persecutions, and that will continue to exist under Divine protection till the end of the world, whatever solution may be given to the question as to the relation that ought to subsist between it and the civil governments of the earth.

2. But this leads us to remark, in the second place, that the religion of a nation is to be determined not so much by the legislative relation in which religion stands to the civil government through the medium of a Church estab-

assumes the garb of refinement and culture, can never have any other than the fatal effect of quenching all lofty national aims, of dimming and distorting the national eye, and, anarchical as it is in its very nature, of producing, first, national contentions and confusion, and finally national ruin. It is only under the sway of principles that connect a people with God, that we can expect to find humanity rising above itself, and pursuing a course of action that is disinterested, unselfish, noble.

The acknowledged supremacy of God, then,—the recognised supremacy of the Divine will as revealed in Holy Scripture; in other words, National Religion,—is the alone principle of that national government which is suited to this advanced, and, in the opinion of some, this final stage of earthly civilisation on which we are entering.

4. Finally, this is a principle around which the Christian Church is specially called to rally, and with a view to the realisation of which it should cordially unite.

Whether or no the endowment of the Church by the State deserves to be singled out, and spoken of as a distinctive religious principle; or whether, as some now seem to be indicating, the principle for which the Church ought anxiously to contend lies in the *civil establishment* of the Church rather than in the question of endowments; whatever view any one may take of these very minute but very interesting distinctions, it will not be doubted that the question of national religion does involve a principle—a great principle, a broad and majestic principle, the triumph and ascendancy of which would be nothing less than the millennial reign of Christ,—nothing short of that Christocracy which is to be the antitype of the old Hebrew Theocracy.

This is clearly a positive and operative principle rather than a mere negation. It has the merit of being not destructive but creative. So far as the operation of the principle itself is concerned, it can be carried out with an establishment or without one—on the Voluntary or on the State method of supporting the Gospel. It can afford to leave subordinate and indeterminate questions like

those of Establishments and Endowments to be dealt with as in the course of Providence they may arise, and to be decided by the living Church in the way of allowing the light of truth, and justice, and Scripture, and Christian expediency, to bear on the circumstances under which they may require to be considered.

At the present time there are zealously propagated a good many forms of opinion that, in one way or other, bear on the subject of National Religion. Thus, there are many persons who eagerly desire the overthrow of ecclesiastical establishments, because they have set their hearts upon the complete severance of the religious principle from legislation, politics, and education. There are, on the other hand, those who as earnestly seek to uphold such establishments, not so much from a pious appreciation of the value of religion to national and political life, as from hereditary and aristocratic and conservative sentiments. They have little or no faith in religion except as it is embodied in institutions and observances that are sanctioned and regulated by the Legislature. Left to itself, they seem to think, religion would soon either die and be buried, or become absolutely wild and frantic, and instead of aiding government, itself become an uncontrollable and disorganising power. But there are also many who, not from any political considerations, whether liberal or conservative, much less from any dislike to religion,—on the contrary, from the very desire they have that religion should become the ascendant and governing power of the nation,—are desirous that statesmen, instead of charging themselves with the business of the Church, would respectfully listen to the Church's teachings, on national as well as personal matters, and—comparing these teachings with the Word of God, the only supreme and infallible authority—on their own official responsibility do what they believe to be right. Those who belong to this class desire the nation to be really, and in the highest sense religious; they would have its constitution religious, and political offices to be filled by persons possessing moral and religious qualifications. This is

their ideal of a Christian State; it is, in our judgment, a true ideal; and towards its realisation it seems to us the Church at present should be everywhere unitedly contributing all its wisdom and power.

Surely there is a principle here that the Churches should lay hold of more vigorously than they have for long done, and up to the height of which they should seek to rise. Is there not in this principle the foundation-stone for a basis of union among the Churches, especially among the Churches of Scotland, where, to such an extent, union already exists in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government? What we now seem to want for the full and final development of religion in our native land, is, in addition to a soundly evangelical and earnestly evangelistic Church, a Church *nationalistic* also—not merely national but *nationalistic*—a Church cherishing the deliberate purpose of subduing the nation, not to herself, but to God and to His Son—the deliberate purpose of bringing not the people only and the rulers only, as individuals, but the politics of the people, and the politics of the rulers, and all civil things, under the rule of Messiah the Prince, so that we might be able to point to a “kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ,” not merely portrayed as a distant glory on the prophetic scroll, but as an actual glory written on the page of historic fact.

There is in this, as we have said, something positive and practical for the Churches to unite about, and ample work to give scope for their highest and noblest energies. If the ecclesiastical mind of Scotland were absorbed with this glorious aim, how much better it would be both for the Churches and for the country. The questions that are now so much occupying it, whatever may be their importance, are inferior to this one. The Reformed Presbyterian Church itself, however deeply she has studied this question, has, perhaps, scarcely yet mastered it, or realised its magnitude and vast bearings, and the momentous duty of prominently holding it out at the present time, whether as a separate denomination or in a united Church. Unless the contemplated union of the

Churches gathers round this high Christian purpose, and brightens the prospect of its realisation, I, for one, would feel such union to be a far less important object than I have hitherto conceived it to be.

In the meantime, let this Church renewedly study all that is involved in the principle of national religion; and let it seek—perhaps by methods more specific than heretofore—to develop sound views on this subject. Our circumstances are singularly favourable for doing so. For, whatever may be alleged by those who do not know, or who intentionally misrepresent, our precise ecclesiastical position, together with the grounds of it, I feel as if I might say, without justly exposing myself to the charge either of prejudice or arrogance, that there is no Church in the land more generally free, on the one hand, from the fetters of traditionalism, and, on the other, from the mischiefs of latitudinarianism, than this Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. We are cordially evangelical in doctrine; we are, also, I trust, evangelistic in spirit; let us not then—since we claim to be, in principle and in spirit, the heirs, and successors, and representatives of the Old Covenanted Church of Scotland—let us not think it bold to avow that we cherish *nationalistic* aims and hopes, and that the vision which ever floats before us, giving light in the darkest night, and vigour in the weakest hour, is, that we are humbly helping on the realisation of the predicted consummation, when this land of Scotland, with all lands “from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same,” shall do willing homage to the Heaven-appointed King, under whose reign the song sung by angels on the plains of Bethlehem at His nativity, shall be sung on all the earth by men who have become the companions of angels, and who have been made joyful in the experience of redemption through the blood of their Saviour-King, and in good government under His reign.

“Awake! awake! put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient times!” “Renew our days as of old!” Revive—purify—exalt—unite the Churches of

our beloved land, that they may be mighty through thy power working in them, for doing the work of this Their day! "Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us!"

Fathers and Brethren, it is exactly twenty years since I stood before this Court in the place and in the position which I occupy to-night. To the changes that have occurred in the ministry and eldership of this church during these years I will not venture to do more than allude. The still familiar forms of venerated fathers who then sat on seats now occupied by others, start up before us without any effort. We are thankful to see that the seats are not empty. I would take the liberty of exhorting those who fill them to imitate the faith of their predecessors, to emulate their example, to walk in their steps, and (especially at a sifting time such as this), to follow that steadfastness, which they so signally, and with so much self-denial, displayed, as opposed to all fickleness and change, from mere personal considerations and motives. It is our privilege to know where these fathers have gone. We sorrow not as those who have no hope. We see them "around the throne, arrayed in the white robes that have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and holding in their hands the palms of triumph." The sight of them cheers, and animates, and strengthens the desire, not only to be followers of them on earth, but to follow them to heaven. But while pastors and teachers, and fathers and brethren, disappear from the Church on earth, "the word of the Lord endureth for ever." The subject of my discourse twenty years ago was, "The Reign of Christ, the Want of the Age, and the Hope of the Nations." In substance, though not in form, that is my subject to-night; and, after twenty years' experience, I may be permitted to testify it as my belief, that as there is no Saviour for a sinful man except the Lord Jesus Christ, and no religion that sanctifies and makes meet for heaven save the Christian religion, so there is no hope for the good government of the nations but in the reign of the "Man of God's right hand," and no warrant for

expecting such a thing as a religious nation except that which is founded on the Power, on the Word, and on the Spirit of Christ.

Whether addressing myself to the individual, to the family, to the city, to the Church, to the nation, the banner I would everywhere unfurl would have on it this inscription, "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, He will save us."

In the present divided state of the Churches, when distractions, and animosities, and strifes have sprung up from the very attempts at union—and this at a time when the world might warrantably have been looking to the Church for a specimen of unity, and peace, and concord—at such a time as this, with an eye lifted up from the Church on earth to the Church's glorious Head in heaven, and still fixed on Him as the one "King of Zion," and "Governor among the nations," whose will it is that His people should be "one," I feel disposed to conclude this discourse with the old prayer of Milton :—the Christian patriot's prayer :—

"O Thou, the ever-begotten light and perfect image of the Father, intercede! Who is there that cannot trace Thee now, in Thy beamy walk through the midst of Thy sanctuary, amidst those golden candlesticks which have long suffered a dimness? Come, therefore, O Thou that hast the seven stars in Thy right hand, appoint Thy chosen priests to minister before Thee, and duly to press and pour out the consecrated oil into Thy holy and ever-burning lamps. . . . Come forth out of Thy royal chambers, O Prince, of all the kings of the earth! Put on the visible robes of Thy Imperial Majesty! Take up that unlimited sceptre which the Almighty Father hath bequeathed Thee; for now the voice of Thy bride calls Thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed."

END.



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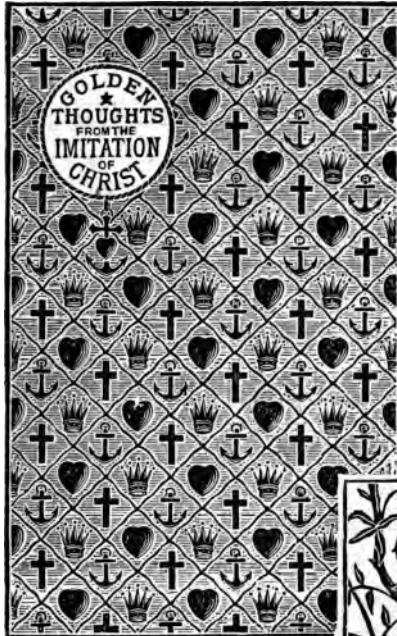
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